THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF J&K STATE AND MY DAYS

BY PRITHVI N.CHAKU

A Political and Social History of Jammu and Kashmir State and My Days

A Political and Social History of Jammu and Kashmir State and My Days

Prithvi N. Chaku

VANTAGE PRESS
New York

FIRST EDITION

Published by Vantage Press, Inc.
516 West 34th Street, New York, New York 10001

Manufactured in the United States of America
ISBN: 0-533-10612-5

Library of Congress Catalog Card No.: 93-93755

0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dedication

To young school boys and girls uprooted from Kashmir Valley whom I visited in the winter of 1991 in refugee tents in Nagrota camp, Jammu (India). Their bright but forlorn looks are a haunting memory.

Contents

Introduction

As a genre, autobiographies do not seem to carry a high value tag. This may be because, as they chronicle events of a life time, they are prone to be used for a narration of long-held grievances or to attempt to settle an old controversy. That is perhaps true only about the run-of-the-mill types and, even so, need not be a factor which detracts from their true worth.

There are distinguished specimens of this writing, works of literature full of knowledge and wisdom which give much satisfaction. Mahatma Gandhi's *Experiments with Truth* is a classic in this respect. Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography, Denis Haley's *The Time of My Life,* and Russel Baker's *On Growing Up,* to name only a few, are such works. And, when a writer includes events from his life as a strand in a complex web-like system, philosophical, historical, and literary, the picture comes to acquire a creative quality which exhilirates. Such are two of V. S. Naipal's latest works, *The Enigma of Arrival,* and *A Way in the World.*

The pages that follow deal largely with mundane matters and there is an element of ego present. The chief driving force for me was to give expression to my thoughts. By keeping the narration close to the economic and social environment of the times in which I lived, I wanted to invest it with historical value. Since the book was written over some time, there is some repitition. And

in regard to important events and personalities I would appear to be judgemental. In the nature of things, this was unavoidable.

As fates have decreed, the last few years have seen Jammu and Kashmir, my home state in India, going down in ruin. That this should have been brought about, even though partly and indirectly, by those whom I held in high regard and whose close association enabled me over long years to render many years of meaningful public service, has filled me with sadness. The chapter titled 'Epilogue' explains how I view the insurrection, its causes and what the outlook can be.

The situation which Kashmiris find themselves in is as intractable as it is fraught with potential for the worsening of conditions. Since reactions demand cooling of passions and concerted action on the part of all Kashmiris to positively affect the course of events.

The number of people to whom I am obliged for persuading me to undertake this venture in the face of handicaps of various kinds is too large for me to thank them individually. These are the members of my family, principal among them being my wife, who could not stand the unedifying sight of the unused mass of papers sitting idle for a long time on the shelf. There were also friends who wanted the history of these "momentous years"to be told for the benefit of future generations. To them and all my other friends in Jammu who were generous with their time and advice, I offer my thanks.

Above all to Vantage Press, Inc., of New York, I owe a debt of gratitude, without whose timely assistance this effort would not have materialized.

Prithvi N. Chaku

A Political and Social History of Jammu and Kashmir State and My Days

Chapter I

Preindependence Administration and Policies

Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the *gadhi* (throne) of the Jammu and Kashmir state of India in 1926 on the death of his uncle, Maharaja Pratap Singh. Though some instances of unrest occurred in the Kashmir valley and some political malcontents came to the surface after the political reverses had blown over that Maharaja Pratap Singh suffered vis-à-vis the political arm of the government of India, his rule was largely uneventful. The administration was mainly concerned with the maintenance of social and political order.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that the government of the day was indifferent towards beneficent activities in fields such as education and health. The basis for the education of the people at large was laid during this period. Primary and secondary education had the pride of place. University education was not ignored. In fact, two of the oldest institutions providing an education in arts and sciences up to the postgraduate stage were established. So was a technical institute set up in Srinagar about which more will be said later. Attention was paid also to medical care, though it can hardly be said that such facilities reached more than a fringe of the population.

Life ran its course in placid waters. People were poor, almost resigned in their attitude towards life, and hardly

any serious grievances against the feudal order, of which they were important elements, were articulated. The maharaja was a shrewd ruler, keeping very much on the right side of the imperial power that had bitten him once. He resisted, so it is said, efforts of the British to annex Gilgit and obtain permission to settle in the valley. He countered such pleas by saying that, after all, they were British subjects; how could they become his?

The relative quiet that prevailed in the state during Maharaja Pratap Singh's time was as much a reflection of the condition of the Indian society in general as it was attributable to the practical and astute statesmanship that the maharaja displayed. Maharaja Hari Singh, who succeeded him, was cast in a different mould. He had received a "modern" education, had travelled widely, and, though born a Hindu, was as unorthodox in his religious beliefs and way of living as he was in his attitude towards the political and social problems of the day. One can hazard the view that apparently, under the influence of his travels and contacts abroad and the type of education he had received, he brought to bear on his management of the state during the initial years of his rule an outlook characterised by enlightened benevolence. This was accompanied by not-too-loyal behaviour towards the imperial power in India. Indeed, incidents occurred that showed how ill-concealed was the maharaja's resentment towards the British presence. In both these respects, the maharaja offered a significant contrast, not only to his predecessor, but also to most of the other princes on the Indian subcontinent.

During the early years of the maharaja's reign, these two processes—one aimed at his evincing interest in the welfare of the people, irrespective of their religious faiths,

the other indicative of his dislike of the alien power—operated simultaneously. In 1928, speaking at the Srinagar Club, which up until 1947 was a close preserve of Europeans, he exhorted his hosts to refrain from exploiting his Indian subjects as he had reason to believe was happening. He referred to the sweatshop wages that were being paid to labourers and others in Pahalgam, a famous health resort in the valley. He welcomed them as tourists and wanted them to spend as generously as tourists did, for example, in Switzerland. At another time he declared that his religion was justice. This was a supreme gesture to his Muslim subjects, considering the conditions of the time. A practical proof of his willingness to live up to his word was given when he began visiting the annual Eid prayers at Eid grounds and in some other ways, too, like measures that were adopted to rid the peasants of the burden imposed on them by the moneylenders and by introducing them to compulsory free education. Alongside of this, his statement at the first Round Table Conference in London supporting the cause of Indian independence must have come as a shock to his British masters. His brother princes—for none of them seemed to echo these sentiments—must have been equally stunned.

The tragedy of Maharaja Hari Singh's rule, so it seems, was that he showed inadequate appreciation of the basic principle on which the Indian state of the time was based. The British power in India sustained and drew sustenance from the large number of principalities that were scattered over the length and breadth of the subcontinent. How could the imperial power allow any one of these vassal units to turn its back on Britain by making a popular appeal to the people? There was, besides, an inherent contradiction in the maharaja's position. Apparently, he was not interested in democratising the state in any significant

sense. Indeed, the feudal character of the state showed hardly any signs of change. It was, therefore, the protest of a weak partner against his more powerful ally, who knew the tricks of the trade far too well.

The year 1931 will be remembered as an important year in the recent history of this ancient part of our country. It represented the birth of a new epoch. The speech of an unknown non-Kashmiri in the summer of this year at one of the more important mosques of the capital city of Srinagar sparked off a veritable revolt. After an attack on the local jail, the mobs induldged in widespread arson and looting. The uprising was obviously of a communal character. Some deaths were also reported. The state authorities were taken entirely by surprise, and it was some time before normal conditions were restored. In the aftermath, articulate political elements organised theselves into what came to be called the Kashmir Muslim Conference.

The political awakening of people in the valley was the end result of forces that operated both inside and outside the state. Indeed, it appeared that the movement, which for quite some time took the form of an uprising of Muslim subjects of the state against Dogra hegemony, was drawing support from political elements outside the state. The Ahrars, a Muslim political organisation of the Punjab, for example, sent groups of volunteers in aid of the agitation launched by the Muslim conference. The state faced a grave crisis. The government of India, apparently out of solicitude for the interests of the state, intervened with a view to pulling the state out of a difficult situation. Troops of the Indian army, some of them British, helped the maharaja bring the increasing ferocity of the agitators under control. They nominated ministers to help the administration. The state was saved, but the political life of the

state—and of the valley in particular—was never the same again. It underwent a sea change.

The Muslim conference, which functioned mainly in the province of Kashmir, during the years 1931–38, became a political organisation for voicing grievances of Muslims against the government and now and then conducted campaigns. In Jammu, Muslim politics was not as articulate or organised. The politics of the Muslim League of British India, however, had some influence over Jammu Muslims.

In 1938, the Muslim conference rechristened itself the National Conference, opening its doors to people of all religions residing in Jammu and Kashmir. Though non-Muslim membership was very small, still some members of the minority communities in the state, the Hindus and Sikhs, did enter the party. A programme was drawn up and issued under the grandiose title of New Kashmir. This document, by which the leaders swore, contained the hopes and aspirations of the National Conference for the economic and social uplift of the people. It pledged the party to securing economic and social justice for people when it came to power.

The National Conference developed relations with the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Without the National Conference becoming an affliate of the congress, the association between the two organisations grew into a very close relationship, both on a personal plane between leaders and in respect to political and social policies. A major role in this was performed by the Indian States People's Conference with the activities of which leaders of the National Conference were intimately connected. As a result, though the Indian National Congress consistently declined to intervene in the internal political situation of the Indian states—and for this reason the congress did

not function in the states—the National Conference fully professed the principles of secularism and democracy, which formed the hard core of congressional cities.

How did the ruler and his government act in these changed conditions? The maharaja lost his former interest in getting closer to his people. The years of initial conflict and the subsequent struggle between him and the leadership of the National Conference embittered him considerably. During the early phases of the conflict, when at one time it seemed that the existence of the state was in jeopardy, he declared that he was proud to be a "Hindu and prouder still to be a Rajput." The future historian will evaluate adequately this radical change in the ruler's political philosophy. Was it the emotional reaction of a well-disposed ruler to what he considered an inspired movement or was it a passing phase in the life of the state and not of much consequence? Or was it designed to rally Hindu opinion inside and outside the state behind himself?

Whatever may have been the political advantages of the utterance at the time, it would appear correct to consider the long-range effect of this shift in the declared political outlook of the ruler as injurious to the state. It has to be remembered, however, that the political character of the state always gave the unsavoury feeling that the state consisted of three distinct groups, the Kashmiris, the Dogras, the Baltis, and others living in the "frontier" districts of Ladakh, Kargil, and Gilgit. We will have occasion to say more on this subject. However, mention must be made here of one of several factors that contributed a good deal towards the growth of the feeling among Kashmiris that they were not being treated as equal partners in the running of the state.

Kashmiris, Hindus, and Muslims could not be recruited into the state forces. The Kashmiris felt they were not trusted to be members of the armed forces, and they lost thereby a good opportunity to develop their youth physically and morally. Unfortunately, subsequent events have not brought the groups, at least the Dogras and the Kashmiris, any closer to each other. The old feelings of mutual distrust, engendered by an absence of social and cultural links between these two elements of the body politic of the state and the politics of the postindependence era, had superimposed a situation that seemed to do nothing to bridge the gap between them.

The National Conference strengthened its organisation during the years of the Second World War. Agitations for one cause or another were started and from press and platform the party articulated its policies and a mass movement was gradually but steadily built up. Eventually, "responsible assembly" became the popular demand, that is, a legislature representing the people, which would be the source of executive power.

There was an assembly functioning in the state for several years before 1947. It had a membership of seventy-five, of whom only seven were elected representatives of the people. In the early forties the maharaja made a gesture towards political reform by associating a representative of the National Conference and a member of the Dogra Sabha Jammu with his government. Both were members of the state assembly mentioned above. One of them, however, the representative of the National Conference, was an elected member and the other a nominated member. The state cabinet had, consequently, two ministers drawn from the assembly, who came to be called the popular ministers. This step towards liberalising the government was feeble, because both the composition of the assembly

and the relationship between the executive and the assembly did not bear features of a parliamentary type of government. But the step, which was initiated in the time of Sir B. N. Rau, who later played a distinguished part in the framing of the Indian constitution, as prime minister, was a move in the right direction, and if subsequent events had been favourable the political history of Kashmir, one can venture the guess, may have taken a far different and happier course than it did. What happened?

There were signs of thaw in the political atmosphere. The popular ministers were functioning. A "state subject" had become the prime minister in 1945, rising from a humble position to high status. Besides luck, he had qualities of mind and character. A constructive effort had been made by him to create in the people's minds a new image of the maharaja. He (the ruler) motored in a procession through the main streets of Srinagar, where at a prominent place he was received by leaders of the National Conference, led by Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla. This was a notable event, indeed, coming as it did after long years of strained relations, between the ruling dynasty and the National Conference, which was the popular organisation politically much more important than the other party led by Maulvi Yusuf Shah.

The improvement would become, it was soon realised, short-lived. The dyarchical system of reform turned out to be a weak plant, needing gentle care for strength and growth. Conflict arose over apparently a minor matter. That, at least, was the impression the outside world got. The National Conference representative in the government wanted a separate secretariat for himself. This seemed to be hardly an adequate ground for the maharaja to destroy the institutional changes towards liberalising his rule that he had launched. Maybe the reasons went

deeper. The National Conference withdrew its representative from the government. Another member of the legislature also at that time a member of the National Conference was appointed to take his place. The schism that this act of the maharaja's government produced in the National Conference was undoubtedly most unfortunate. Sheikh Abdulla became bitter over what he thought was the ingratitude of the prime minister from whom he expected better conduct, at least due to the fact that he, the sheikh, had shown his satisfaction over the prime minister's appointment, if not actually contributing to it. That one of his followers should have been enticed into office in this manner was taken as a serious challenge, so it seems, by him and the National Conference. The old struggle, after a brief interlude, was resumed now with renewed vigour and to different purpose. The agitation took the cue from the "quit India" movement of the congress in 1942. The National Conference wanted the maharaja to quit Kashmir. Thus was articulated, in a manner of speaking, the deep-seated sentiment of the Kashmiris against the domination of Dogras. Ostensibly, it was a movement for the abolition of the dynastic rule.

In May 1946, when this agitation was launched, the valley presented an unpleasant sight. In the early days of this month, Srinagar City saw a good bit of repression and though the city was agog with tourists, particularly from the Punjab, resentment was simmering below the surface. The government, on the other hand, was firm in its resolve to maintain law and order, and the maharaja sought to meet "the people" in his palace. Lorry loads of people, many of them civil servants, were carried to the palace where the maharaja from a second-floor balcony read a speech, which few heard and fewer still understood. The maharani and young prince appeared, evoking sentiments

of loyalty from some. The prime minister was heard describing the National Conference leaders as "fascists." The entire performance was an unedifying spectacle.

The period following the cessation of the Second World War hostilities in 1945 was as crucial for the valley of Kashmir as it was for the rest of India. In the valley the National Conference was describing its political philosophy as clearly wedded to nationalism and secular democracy. It was during this time that Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah of the Indian Muslim League paid a visit to Kashmir. (Indeed, he spent a good part of the summer of 1946 in Srinagar.) He was apparently probing, coaxing, and guiding. His efforts were completely fruitless. After him and right up to the autumn of 1947, his emissaries came on the same mission. Not much success attended their efforts. The National Conference did not believe in the two-nation theory of the Muslim League.

The "quit Kashmir" agitation was, in one respect, of unique significance. The Indian National Congress indicated its deep interest in the movement not by passing formal resolutions, but through statements issued by important leaders. Above all, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was soon to become the first prime minister of free India, made no secret of his personal involvement in the struggle. Judged in retrospect, this departure of the National Congress from its traditional policy of aloofness from the internal policies of the states had far-reaching consequences, the effects of which, in a sense, have still not lost their force. Nehru tried to visit Kashmir to offer his moral support, despite, it was said, the advice of the government of India to the contrary. He was taken into custody and lodged in the Uri Dak Bangalow. (Uri is now the border town between Indian Kashmir and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.) The maharaja was embittered beyond measure,

and so was the future prime minister of India. As in all human affairs, political developments do bear in some degree the impress of the nature of the main personalities involved, their mutual relationships, and their assessment of each other. If history is, in a sense, a summation of important social, political, and economic events occurring over a period, it is also the end product of emotions, attitudes, and character of the chief actors on the political scene.

The year 1946 will go down in the history of the subcontinent as a dark and dreadful year. Starting with the great Calcutta massacre of August 16 in that year, the crescendo of communal frenzy and fratricidal conflict between the two communities—Hindus and Muslims—rose until it covered most of the northern part of the country as it was then. In March 1947 it appeared that trouble in the Punjab was going to erupt soon in the shape of riots, killings, and arson. That happened. On the political scene it was now clear that the British were going to depart from the subcontinent. The paramountcy over the Indian states that was vested in the viceroy as crown representative was to lapse and the princes consequently would become sovereign within their own respective territories. The British government, however, declared that the states should merge with one of the two countries that would be born after the Independence of India Act was passed, keeping in view the facts of geography and other interests of the state concerned.

It is against this brief background of events that took place in the subcontinent immediately before August 1947 that we may now study the events in the Jammu and Kashmir state. The Muslim League of India had hardly any roots in the valley. As we have seen, the National

Conference, with its adherence to the values and principles of the Indian National Congress, was in command of the political scene. In Jammu Province, particularly in the city of Jammu and in areas bordering on what is now West Pakistan, the cult of the Muslim League had found a good number of adherents. The Muslims in Jammu City were a well-organised body, their main interest being resistance to the Hindus. In fact, over a good period of time the Hindus and Muslims were indulging in sabre rattling and conflicts and clashes between the two were not uncommon. But it cannot be said that the Muslims were, in an articulate sense, wedded to the two-nation theory or to bringing down the Hindu rule. The Hindus in Jammu had also organised themselves under the influence of the heat that was being generated in the Punjab and elsewhere.

The summer of 1947 in the valley was brisker than usual. The number of visitors was quite considerable. The air was hot with political rumours, but with the National Conference leaders behind bars, life in the state did not show any unusual signs of unrest. The government of India had, it appears, advised the maharaja to make a decision, one way or another, in the matter of accession to India or Pakistan before the two independent countries were born in August 1947. The congress president paid a visit to the state, presumably on a mission to persuade the maharaja to accede to India. Mahatma Gandhi came himself and met the maharaja. The purpose can only be guessed. The mahatma on his leaving the state declared that the future of the state depended on the people, the maharaja, and Pakistan. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is reported to have told the state government, after August 1947 of course, that if the maharaja decided to go to Pakistan the government of India would not stand in his way.

The attitude of the maharaja was ambivalent and prevaricatory. He did not, perhaps, want to commit the state to any conclusive decision. This became evident when Lord Mountbatten, the viceroy, visited the state during the summer of 1947. Finally, the state government decided to enter into a "standstill agreement" with the parties concerned. Pakistan agreed, but India declined so long as the National Conference was not brought into the picture, entailing the association of its leaders with the running of the government.

The anguish of some people in Kashmir can be imagined. Why did the maharaja not decide, as he did later, for India? Was he afraid of his Muslim subjects, who he thought would not like it, or did he think that with parts of the Jammu border showing signs of rebellious activity Pakistan might attack? All factors such as these, one can guess, may have been weighed by the maharaja, but the future historian may decree in favour of the view that his hatred of the National Conference, whose leader, Sheikh Abdulla, he always considered his number-one enemy and the deep aversion he had developed over some time for the Indian National Congress, as a result of the support its leaders gave to the National Conference, were the main impediments to a timely decision in favour of India. The arrival of Nehru on the scene when Sheikh Abdulla launched his "quit Kashmir" agitation had been the last straw to break the camel's back.

One must pause awhile and mention the performance, or lack of it, of the maharaja's advisors. Two prominent personalities come to mind, and a strange pair they were indeed. They were contemporaries and acted during this brief critical period each in his respective sphere. Liaison between them is not known, nor is this of much consequence. Of one we have spoken earlier; he was the prime

minister, a local resident of the valley whose accession to power was as much the result of his talent and artifice as, reportedly, of the avowed approval of the sheikh. Why did the prime minister not advise conclusive action, and in favour of India? He may have had reasons similar to those of the maharaja. In that event the maharaja could not have dispensed with his services before August 15, as he did. If there was serious conflict of opinion why did the prime minister not resign? Authentic evidence for a firm conclusion will be available only in the long run. The other advisor to the maharaja was a Sanyasi, an ascetic, who spent his days in regal splendour, enjoying the hospitality of the maharaja with real gusto. This Sanyasi had, the story goes, advised the maharaja to wait for the day when he would become a free monarch, his domain extending as far as Lahore in the Punjab.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir on August 15, 1947, became a state on its own with a standstill agreement with Pakistan. A new prime minister was in office, and the National Conference leaders were confined in jails. The border of the state in the "frontier" districts of Gilgit, Ladakh, and Skardu and areas of Jammu Province adjoining West Punjab were in a state of ferment. Political developments are awaited with eagerness.

Chapter II
My Early Years

It was not easy for me to go to college. My father was a teacher, having gone as far as privately taking the matriculation, intermediate, and degree examinations of Punjab University. His perseverance and habits of thrift and providence were exemplary and, among other things, got him through the first two examinations with credit. Illness was the chief cause for his failure in the degree examination. This hurt him a great deal, and he cherished the hope that his son would do what he was not able to do himself. It was impossible, at the same time, for him not to take an objective view of things, which meant, more than anything, living within his means. He could never think of getting into debt even for a worthwhile cause. The education he gave his sons and the weddings of his children that he provided notwithstanding, he always kept his head above water and considered frugal living and contentment as essential ingredients of a happy and decent life. He suggested, halfheartedly, though, that I might visit the local government technical institute and enquire whether they would admit me to one of their classes, preferably the civil overseers' class, after the results of the matriculation examination of Punjab University, which I had taken, were out. This institute had been founded years ago to impart training in vocational trades like blacksmithing, carpentry, and basket weaving. Painting and

commercial art were also taught. There was also a class for instructing students in surveying and elementary civil engineering. A reputable Englishman was one of the first principals, and the rest of the staff were competent as well. This school played a noble part, however small it may have been, in providing the state with a large number of able surveyors, draftsmen, and overseers. Art masters were also produced, some of whom were selected by the central government in the postindependence period for specific jobs. Judging from the importance that industrial schools and polytechnics have come lately to enjoy as means valuable as much for diversifying our educational system as for providing small trades with manpower, this institute was a pioneer in the field of education. Its gradual decline and subsequent disappearance, were therefore, regrettable indeed.

I went to the institute and gathered the necessary information, but deep down in my heart there was a reluctance to enter its portals. Strangely enough, it appeared to me infra dig to choose a technical course in preference to a college education, which I thought was more honourable. My father would not resist. In fact, he raised the necessary money for me to gain admittance.

The long school years had been a period of hard work and strict discipline both at home and at school. I attended only two government schools, both old ones, a primary school and a high school. The primary school teachers were experienced and, though very meagrely paid, earnestly devoted to their work. They taught us the virtues of punctuality and curiosity for knowledge. Teaching geography in the third or fourth primary class the teacher would not only show us the place with his pointer on the map and later, to our dismay and fright, ask us to show them to him, but he would say such things as, "Naples

is a beautiful city. They say, 'See Naples before you die.' " Another teacher would come and make us burn with excitement when he said one day, "We can produce fire out of water."

The years at the high school were the most fruitful of all. A well-organised school, it was run by an intelligent and highly educated young man. There were a number of able and experienced teachers, some of whom taught the advanced classes. To the headmaster, however, I felt particularly drawn due to his all-round interests. He was a good sportsman and a very impressive teacher. He taught us English grammar and lectured us on many topics. These talks must not have been mere sermons, because I liked to listen and did so with interest and was in some ways influenced by him.

The influence of this school on me was second only to that of my father in inculcating in me habits of hard work and discipline.

I finished high school in 1924 and entered the College for Intermediate Arts Courses. College education in these days, though not costly, was not wholly free. There was a tuition fee to be paid and a number of other charges. Though the total sum was by no means formidable, it was beyond the competence of my father to provide it from within his limited resources. There were, additionally, books to be purchased. The college did provide stipends and free studentships, equal to a fixed proportion of the total admission strength, which were allotted strictly according to House Examination results. These tests were held at regular intervals. The results and announcements of studentships, scholarships and stipends were, therefore, awaited by my family with considerable trepidation, for there was every likelihood of my studies being interrupted if these precious lists failed to carry my name. My

name, however, was always there either for a free studentship or a stipend.

For my bachelor's degree I took philosophy (ethics and psychology), economics, and English as my subjects. For economics there were not more than fifteen or eighteen students, and those with philosophy and economics were only three in number. Economics was a new subject, it being taught those days only to undergraduate students for the first time. The number of teachers recruited from outside the state, from various parts of what was then British India, was quite large, a good number coming from Bengal.

Our economics teacher was from Bombay. He seemed to be learned, or so we thought. He would walk to the college with a heavy load of books and plant them on the table before him in the classroom. He was not old but was in a very poor state of health. This perhaps made him very cynical in his outlook. We began our lessons in this subject, which because of its novelty threatened to be troublesome, under unpropitious conditions. The professor was not quite happy with the subject combination of the three of us who had taken philosophy and economics. He thought this was "like a male wedded to a male." His lectures impressed us in the beginning, though not for the economics that they contained but for the command they indicated he had over the English language. To our frustration we discovered that much of the stuff delivered to us from the platform was a verbal reproduction of the textbook we were expected to study. Though during the few months during which we read with him we learnt hardly anything worthwhile about economics, we found his lectures interesting for the masterly way in which he allowed not a single word or clause of the textbook to escape his

memory when he came to teach and lecture. The contribution that could be said to be his own consisted of a few caustic remarks thrown in parenthetically on the social condition of the country. His health broke down after some time, and he died. We had two more terms to spend at the college before the final university examination. The new teacher of economics was successful in lifting for us the curtain that lay between us and the new subject, economics.

Despite the remoteness of the state to which its geography consigned it, literary and cultural activities of the college were not inadequate. There were occasions when the college attracted the attention of the intellectual elite of the town by organising debates on topical subjects. One such occasion was the debate on widow remarriage. Students with opposite views, one group with the zeal of crusaders to bring about the reform and the other fighting on behalf of Scriptures and traditions, fought a wordy battle for days. The standard of debate was very high, which was primarily due to the presence among us of a young man from Banaras who had come to study Sanskrit in our college. The command over English that this zealous advocate of reform possessed was matched only by his mastery of the subject he was arguing about. He was not only advancing justice and a fair deal for young widows as a reason for reform, but he seemed to say that such a course of action would not be inconsistent with the Shastras—the Hindu Scriptures. The fervour of Sanatanist students opposing this thesis was equally impressive, and the interest taken by well-known and respectable citizens participating in these debates helped to make the debates useful and serious. Annual elocution competitions were also valuable as a means to stimulate interest among us in discussion and debate.

It was April 1928. I had completed four years of my undergraduate career, coming into contact with good, bad, and indifferent teachers, from some of whom one learnt precious little. The college was run in a peaceful atmosphere where responsibility and authority prevailed. The laconic but effective Irish principal ran the college well, but I do not find it possible to say how much influence these years had on the formation of my character, except that I found an intense inquisitiveness welling up in me to learn what it was like in colleges in Lahore, in the Punjab. I longed to go there and see for myself. Lahore was the seat of the university that ruled academically over all colleges, private and governmental, in the old Punjab and adjoining "princely" states. Occasional visits from the mountainous state of Jammu and Kashmir were out of the question. Colleges those days never indulged in the luxury of widening the knowledge and experience of students by taking them on long trips, as is quite common now. Doing so on one's own was not, obviously, feasible for most of the students.

Having done reasonably well in my matriculation and intermediate examinations, I was not unduly perturbed by the gloomy forebodings of our family priest, who on being consulted by my mother said that I would not get through the examination for my bachelor of arts. During the two academic years at college I had done exceptionally well both in economics and philosophy. In House Examinations I generally came second in these subjects, topping the list on one or two occasions. The horoscope reader seemed to be off the track, but in most Hindu homes the presence of a horoscope, which is born almost simultaneously with us, is a source of much mischief because, though it may be true as a precept that "the strong man burns his horoscope and the weak man carries it in his

pocket," many, and it is true of the "educated" as much as of the rest, fall easy prey to this weakness. We expect the stargazer who reads our future from the horoscope to say pleasant things. There is no doubt that the habit of seeking external assistance in this manner against the uncertainties and ups and downs of life does harm to the personality of the man by weakening him morally. One interesting riddle, however, is that there is incontestable evidence of some predictions coming true. Astrology is a field of knowledge, it is asserted by its votaries, with a body of general principles, and it is the amateur dabbler who is responsible for the ill repute that this discipline has acquired. There are some students of this subject who would go so far as to say that its study indicates only tendencies. I have, therefore, tried to persuade myself to the view that whatever the advantages of the system for the intellectually curious person and for those who live on it, because of its definitely debilitating qualities it is necessary to avoid taking interest in the horoscope. I have had only limited success in the implementation of this decision.

My preparation for the university examination (April 1928) was very adequate; I had my own way of preparing. It may not be immodest to admit that in this I had nobody's guidance. I was not impressed by, much less made anxious about, the limited number of books I had read in Ethics, one of the courses in philosophy, when after the winter holidays one of my classmates replied to an enquiry made of all of us by our professor about the number of books studied by us that he had read *Principia Ethica* by Moore and *Critique on Moral Philosophy* by Kant. I had tried to "master" the subject by taking nothing for granted, in the sense that if I did not fully understand a matter in spite of my best efforts, in view of the limited time available, I

ignored it wholly not allowing it to leave any impression on my mind. I would never "cram." In this manner, I was sure I had obtained a much better understanding of the subject than most. The reward was rich. The Ethics question paper at the examination was out of the ordinary. For such questions as these: (i) If God does everything, who commits sin?; and (ii) An individual's conduct is adjudged ordinarily to be good if its result is beneficial to him or to society, but ethical philosophers attach importance to motives behind an act—are the two views mutually compatible? no textbook could give easily identifiable answers. I could avoid both these questions, but I chose one of them, the question relating to motives versus end results of actions. When my professor, who expected much of me, learnt about my choices in general and of this one in particular he shook his head ominously. I explained to him my approach with an air of serious conviction. I had surprised him before also with my bold suggestions regarding important ethical subjects he had taught for a decade or more. The principles underlying such abstruse matters as "the good life" or Kant's categorical imperative or Green's concept of self-realisation should be explained to young students, I thought, in a manner that brings them within the comprehension of immature but receptive minds. This makes successful teaching of this subject not an easy task. Wide knowledge, experience, and capacity to think are as necessary as ability to explain things lucidly. Mere paraphrasing of the text makes the matter more difficult, and the young student aims only at crossing the Rubicon and trying to commit things to his memory. The result can be disastrous. So it was at least in the case of the young man who had declared how extensively he had enlarged his knowledge of Kant and others. He failed a number of times and always in this subject. After taking

the examination, I was strengthened in my belief that the result would be very different from what was predicted and that I would come out sucessful. I did and very creditably indeed. I was placed in the first division, securing the first place in philosophy in the university.

Face to face with reality, how would I be able to proceed to a university centre for postgraduate studies? My father's means were very slender, and he had a sizeable family to maintain. We were three brothers and three sisters, me being the eldest. He decided to borrow from his provident fund account with the government and send me to Lucknow for joining the M.A. (previous) class in economics at the university. The amount drawn was hardly sufficient to meet transportation and other expenses up to and at Lucknow for a few weeks. The monthly allowance he would be able to send me would leave the major part of my financial requirements without any ostensible means of support. My departure at the age of twenty for Lucknow was therefore no mean adventure. We trusted to chance. My father's anxiety to see me carry on my studies was only equalled, as I have stated earlier, by my keen desire to learn and see other parts of the country.

The vice chancellor of Lucknow University, a foreigner, perhaps an Englishman, was vacationing in Kashmir when I met him. He was pleased to learn that students from the north were joining his university, which he said was gaining in popularity. He had considerable numbers on the rolls and spoke about the various departments in which postgraduate work was conducted.

Lucknow University was a residential university, but when I and four other young men who came with me reached Lucknow we decided to stay in a hotel. After the formalities of enrollment were over, classes began. There

was no economics department as a separate entity. Economics was taught in the sociology department. I began to study sociology with Profs. R. K. Mukerji and D. P. Mukerji. Great stalwarts as they were in their fields, I began to question the wisdom of having chosen this university for economics. There were no lectures on economics or any branch of it except public finance. My dissatisfaction turned into despair when I realised after a few weeks that all possible sources of additional finance on which I had begun to rely had dried up. The Kashmir government was offering postgraduate scholarships sometimes to deserving students studying outside the state. My professors at Kashmir College had moved in the matter to get me the benefit of this practice but had failed. Prof. R. K. Mukerji was inclined to get me the award of a scholarship from the university, failing which he would explore the possibility of a free studentship. It was after tramping for a few miles on a hot and sultry day that I reached the professor's bungalow, to be told that neither of the two hopes could materialize. About this time I had also lost private employment with a businessman as tutor to his son. I had taught the boy for a month. Now I faced a serious financial crisis. Then one evening when I arrived at the hotel in a very disconsolate state of mind my friends handed me a telegram from my father asking me to proceed to Lahore for postgraduate studies. This was necessary to avail myself of the postgraduate university scholarship of less than one dollar per (in today's terms) month, which was earned by me by my distinction at the B.A. examination. I decided to return for more reasons than one, the financial being the most predominant. I had been at Lucknow University for exactly a month and a half.

After a brief stay at home, where I went straight from Lucknow, I went to Lahore, where I joined the government college for postgraduate studies in economics. This

college was perhaps the top educational institution in this city. There were a number of arts and science colleges and professional colleges in the fields of medicine, veterinary science, engineering, teaching, and law. These were of a high standard. Lahore was a beautiful city, prosperous and growing, and in the educational world the most important city in northern India. Government College Lahore had an impressive building and was known for its highly qualified staff, many of whom were Englishmen. The College was rather choosy in admitting students. Academic achievements of the applicants were a consideration, but it seemed to us outsiders that family status also counted a good deal. These were days of political agitation, and many college students in Lahore took part in it. Government college students belonged to a class apart and remained aloof. Rich men's sons who lived in a grand style were expected to mind their intellectual and physical pursuits. This, indeed, they did, by and large. They won distinction for themselves and the college at university examinations and in sports and athletics. In cultural and literary activities this college was much ahead of others. The weekly address to students by a senior professor or a distinguished visitor delivered in an atmosphere of solemn dignity was educative. Though postgraduate students did not form part of the mainstream of the college's academic life, since in some subjects, including economics, the university was controlling instruction by pooling the teaching resources of constituent colleges, they could not remain unaffected by its distinctly superior academic life.

There was not a properly organised postgraduate economics department at the university, though it had had for some years a foreigner, a Scotsman, as a professor. He had recently left the university, and a lecturer from one

of the local colleges in effect functioned as acting professor. He taught us money, banking, and international trade. These lectures were delivered at the university, where we attended some other classes given by lecturers from participating colleges. Classes were also held at three colleges whose representatives, apparently, did not like to teach on the university premises.

Economics that I learnt at Lahore was not the result of classroom teaching. One teacher taught Marshall's *Principles* by reproducing the book either in diagrams on the blackboard or through words faithfully memorised. Problems of currency, banking, and international trade, in themselves belonging to highly technical and specialized fields, were made far more complicated and difficult to comprehend by the manner in which another lecturer tried to put them through. As I realised later in life, teaching demands both scholarship and an adequate method. The only classes that one looked forward avidly to attending were those given by Prof. Brij Narain, the well-known economist. He was deeply devoted to his subject, and his research in Indian economic problems had attracted wide attention in India. And abroad. Meeting him, particularly in his private library, was inspiring. Though he had a sharp tongue and could not suffer fools, he was exceedingly polite and could sometimes exhibit warmth of manner. His method of teaching was simple and lucid, and his mastery over the subject shone through his lessons.

My Lahore days brought me in contact with a teacher who had qualities of an unconventional nature. Prof. G. D. Sondhi taught us political science at the government college as a participating lecturer in the university's post-graduate teaching programme. Political Science was one of the courses required for a master's degree in economics. The professor read his notes aloud to us, and as the class

was large, not much knowledge was communicated in this manner. He was my tutor. He would give a topic and suggest books for study. When a paper was submitted some discussion would follow. This effort at bringing the teacher and students together with a view of encouraging among the latter independent study and directing them more intimately than would be possible in the lecture hall did not result in any substantial achievement in this behalf, but it afforded me an opportunity to know the professor better. He impressed me as a person of high purpose and lofty thoughts, and being a world class sportsman and interested in some of the fine arts, he set before us an example of an integrated personality. His interest in me continued for long years, and we met occasionally after my education was completed. His contribution to the world of sports was profound, and he was anxious to secure status for sports and recreation in the educational curricula of Indian universities.

When I returned home, there was nothing to do but visit ministers and high officers asking them for a job. Every young man did so. I had done quite well at university examinations, including the master's in economics. Such was the isolation of the state from the British-held part of the subcontinent that young men generally did not know that one could compete for some all-India services or go for research. Trade and industry were out of the question. These fields, whatever the possibilities, in the valley were never thought of either because traditionally Kashmiri Pandits such as myself did not enter these vocations, or, even if some people were so interested, they did not have the necessary financial resources. Government assistance was never thought of in this respect. Such private large-scale industry as there was, was in the hands of a few outsiders (people belonging to British India or

even foreigners). Small-scale retail trading of a size hardly sufficient to maintain a small family on a subsistence standard was the age-old vocation of Kashmiri Muslims. Big business again had come to be almost the sole preserve of non-Kashmiris. Small wonder, therefore, that members of my community thought of government service as the only source of a living for them. Historically Kashmiri Pandits have always been lured to ply the pen. Jobs were few, though at this particular time, owing to the coming census operations, temporary openings were quite considerable. There were no recruitment rules such as those enjoining the holding of a public test, nor was there an independent body of people charged with the duty of evaluating applicants and recommending them for appointment on grounds of equity and fair play. Knocking at doors was the only way out for those who did not belong to the feudal order or had no godfathers among the landed gentry or in the government. Above all, to be a Kashmiri Pandit was a serious handicap. This social phenomenon is a factor of considerable importance, since its relevance to a proper understanding of some present-day political and administrative problems of Kashmir has not been dimmed by time. More of it, however, as we proceed.

It was not without having to remain idle for a year or so that I was able to obtain the job of a schoolteacher in distant Muzafarabad, now in the hands of Pakistan. It was a small high school, and it is interestng to note that other Pandits like me, having high educational qualifications—one of them had a brilliant acadamic record—but finding entry into government service difficult, started their career here. After I had served in this school for about sixteen months, unforeseen circumstances took me to another town much nearer Srinagar, my hometown.

Some other members of my community who had also "completed" their education, some of them with rare distinction, and I were contending against extremely unfavourable economic and political conditions. I was ambitious and it has always been a strong trait of my character that I believe that something better can be achieved provided I work for it. This has to some extent been justified by events.

The political and social conditions in 1931 were in a ferment. Young Muslims coming out of colleges attracted the notice of the government. They had to be provided with suitable jobs, and so they were, some of them even before university results were out. It was enough, for example, that a young man had done well in the bachelor of arts examination and had taken the master's examination for him to get through it and be given a suitable job. The population of Muslims was predominant in the state, but they had very little share of government posts. The Pandits, on the other hand, a negligible minority in terms of numbers, held a high proportion of government jobs. Inevitably, due to the situation characterised by political unrest, the government gave serious thought to the question of how to draw more and more young Muslims into government service. As we shall see, this matter acquired increasing importance as time passed and after 1947 the policy of favoring Muslims in this manner constituted the cornerstone of government policy. As a social phenomenon it continues to have unique significance in the body politic of the state.

Situated thus, I was determined to go ahead in life by, so I thought, adding to my academic qualifications. While at the Baramulla School, I studied for the master's degree in history, for which purpose I proceeded to Lahore for a brief period during the winter to work on my thesis,

Punjab under the Board of Administration, in the Punjab Record Office.

Having passed this examination, not very creditably, though, I entered the second phase of my struggle for advancement. In 1936, I was in a Jammu high school. There was a lecturer's vacancy in one of the government colleges. The post was for history and economics. The concerned authorities recommended me strongly. The minister, however, thought otherwise. He was an officer of the Indian Civil Service on deputation from the government of India. He told me why, while he "would not play with my feelings," because he appreciated my academic qualifications, he was going to give the post to another person.

I said, "But he has not done any economics, sir."

"Oh. I know," he said, "what it means to be out of this country, and this man has been out."

That the minister talked to me, as he did, for quite some time and asked me to see him the next morning at his residence encouraged me to hope for the better. That was, however, a false hope. When I met him, I must have said something improper, as an aggrieved person, because he concluded the interview, I remember vividly, with the words, "I may be a communalist, but I will not allow you to say that to my face." The episode is almost incredible not only because the minister belonged to the Indian Civil Service, reputed for its integrity and sense of fair play, but also because no communalism was involved. It was a clear case of favouritism.

Some more months passed, and another opportunity came my way for moving forward. Five posts for five different subjects were to be filled in one of the government colleges. There were a number of candidates in the field,

and such was the logic of the government's policy in recruiting people to government service that it was obvious not more than one post would go to a Kashmiri Pandit. There were powerful forces at work that were designing to fill a post other than that of lecturer in history and economics, for which I was a candidate, with a Kashmiri Pandit. Similarly, others were working to get posts for favourites, so that fair play was going to be a casualty. Something had to be done to counteract the mischief. Such, indeed, it was. I teamed up, it must be stated, with another young man belonging to another community whose superior claims, according to him, were also going by default. We fought hard with means that we thought were fair. There was no false reporting of facts by us, though a small amount of character assassination did result from the statements we made before ministers. My friend, when reprimanded by the state prime minister for talking about things that were supposed to be public secrets, said that he would reduce his statement to writing if it was so desired, as if that reduced the guilt involved that the prime minister had in mind, namely, our trying to find out government secrets. Our efforts, however, succeeded. A decision in the matter was soon made by the government. After long years of efforts, I was able to get on the staff of one of the government colleges as a lecturer in the grade of 125–10–175. This was in 1938. It should be obvious that openings were limited and for many like me obtaining a promotion, however, insignificant in monetary terms, was exceedingly difficult.

With this change I came into my own. A new chapter in my life was opened. Soon after my appointment as lecturer, the post of professor in the economics department fell vacant. There was only undergraduate teaching in the college, for which there were only two teachers,

one of whom was designated as professor. This post fell vacant temporarily. It was again not easy for the authorities directly concerned with the administration of the college to get government approval to my taking the temporary place, even though it meant an increase of only forty rupees in my monthly pay. I was eventually promoted and remained in the post for about ten years, before I was made permanent in 1948. The hurdle was that the post became substantively vacant at that time.

I taught economics for over twelve years, that is, up to July 1950. I first taught at my old college, the Sri Pratap College, where, as has been mentioned earlier, I had spent four years before I graduated and proceeded to Lahore for postgraduate studies: A word or two more about the college, which is an old institution with a chequered history. It was established in 1910 as a private college with the help and encouragement of Dr. Annie Besant, the renowned British theosophist, who had visited the valley. The college was subsequently taken over by the government. It remained an affiliated college of the Punjab University up to 1948, when the Jammu and Kashmir University was founded. During its existence the college rendered invaluable service to the development of the state. It provided the administration with men of ability and gradually helped the local residents to enter the various professions, including medicine, engineering, and law. There were teachers with fine reputations, particularly in Sanskrit and philosophy. For some time, owing to the intellectual eminence of its philosopher principal, the college prepared students for the master's degree in philosophy. Students came from other parts of the subcontinent to study Sanskrit. This was said to be due to the learning of the Kashmiri professor of Sanskrit.

The college was bursting at the seams when I became a member of its teaching staff. While the size of the bachelor of arts third- and fourth-year classes at that time was not too large (there were eighty to one hundred students in each class), the intermediate classes, first- and second-year, were distressingly huge. At one time there were as many as 170 students in one of these classes. At this college I taught from 1938 to 1942, doing my best to give satisfaction to the students. This was not easy. In the intermediate classes maintaining discipline in an overcrowded class was the primary task. The presence of women students—over a dozen were there in one such class—always remained a matter of concern to me and the principal. In the fourth-year class the presence of a few boys rather too old for the class, one of whom told me on the very first day that he had spent too many years at the college, and of some who came from the so-called aristocratic part of the community, feigning studied indifference to a new arrival, posed a problem for a brief period.

I had no particular difficulty in keeping the classes under control. The big classes grew bigger from year to year, but the students were well behaved, most of them being interested in their studies. These overcrowded classes, however, presented a minor problem. Taking attendance took time, and the practice among boys of getting their attendance marked through their friends was very annoying. I decided to stop this and tried to identify students as they answered the roll call. To a large extent I was successful. I also insisted on punctuality. This has been a matter of special interest for me, whether I was standing on the platform to lecture to a class or heading a large office. In the matter of discipline in the class, I have come to believe that the most effective method is to let the class form their impression about the teacher

concerning whether he is serious about his work and interested in the welfare of his students. During the early years of my work as a teacher of economics I was able to win from students a regard for me. The only occasion when a situation arose during this early period was when the students of the first fourth-year class I took staged a strike. They wanted me to conduct the class in the open, citing the examples of other classes, quite a number of which were held on the playgrounds. I could not bring myself round to agree to this because, for one thing, the loss of the blackboard presented some difficulty and, for the other, and this was the main reason, the students, I thought, did not concentrate as well outside the classroom as they did inside. I remembered my own college days when, on these very grounds, there was seldom much attention given to what the learned professor was talking about. While attention was conditioned by other factors like the subject taught, the manner in which it was taught, and the personality of the teacher, the attention we gave to the instruction given in these open-air classes was to a large extent influenced by happenings on the large grounds, however trivial.

Having refused once, I persisted. A number of days passed, and the principal, who had supported me in my decision, began to make enquiries of me. He was not feeling concerned, but in the nature of things, he wanted an end to the matter. I requested patience. After a few more days, one of the young men, the student who had claimed to have been in the college longest, approached me with the request that the matter be closed, with some sort of concession being given to the class. What did he propose? I should conduct the class in the open once, he said. I agreed. It was to be on a Saturday, and since the class used to be in the last period I thought the compromise

was in order. The strike was called off. Everybody, including the principal, except one member of the staff who thought himself to be cleverer than many, was happy. The doubting Thomas asked the principal in my presence how the "strike" could end so easily. I must have caused the strike knowing that I could bring about its end and hoping to impress the authorities eventually by switching it off. It has been my misfortune to come across such ungracious and malicious behaviour on the part of people with whom I have had something to do. (This applies to all my relationships, by and large.) This perhaps is not uncommon and can be the fate of many. What, however, was peculiar in my case was my helplessness, my complete inability to defend myself, so to speak, getting even with the offending person. It should be stated that I recoil from having to be rough and more so when it is by way of retaliation. I have faced situations where I was being given a very raw deal and sometimes almost brutalized. Thus one of the principals in this very college under whom I worked in my earlier years when being told that we should, in the case of a student who had misbehaved with a lecturer, take a balanced view of things, said in unambiguous terms that "we should not be idealists; we are all communalists." The teacher and the student belonged to two different communities, the teacher belonging to the principal's community and the student to mine. The student received the heaviest penalty. He was expelled from the college. I do not remember all the facts to be able to say whether the punishment was much too heavy, which it may well have been. But I did not tell the principal, who was highly qualified, that a teacher's place is on the "scrap heap" if he is not an idealist and that I was not and certainly had never been a communalist. This should have been a perfectly appropriate answer, particularly in the context of

social and political conditions prevailing at that time and my reputation. I will have occasion to refer again to such experiences. That part of the reason for my silence or passivity in these situations stemmed from my innate hatred for ugly reprisals is very clear to me. I feel, however, that it is only a part, even if a large one. Lack of adequate moral courage, which in a philosophical sense I value as the highest of human virtues, may also be a contributory factor, but I am not absolutely sure.

The college that was my alma mater and where I first started teaching as lecturer could not continue for long with its large size, which, given the resources of space, personnel, and equipment, was becoming difficult to manage properly. It was considered unusual to have two government degree colleges in the same town, and so the college was broken into two parts, a separate college being set up to accommodate senior undergraduate classes. Eventually, the two colleges became full-fledged degree colleges, the old one resuming teaching in the higher-degree classes and the newly established college securing a base in the form of intermediate (postmatriculation) classes. The reluctance on the part of the government to set up a second degree college with intermediate and degree classes turned out, therefore, to be temporary, but the manner in which the new government college was started did permanent harm to the wider interests of education in the state. Mention has been made earlier of the government technical institute that had been established before the First World War broke out. The organisation of the institute showed considerable imagination inasmuch as it reflected an attempt at introducing an entirely novel element into the educational system of the state as it was then. Engineering education, for example, for junior and senior personnel has made considerable progress in the

country, the pace having gained much acceleration only after independence, and industrial schools, are mostly off-spring of the five-year plans. The Srinagar technical school was evidently a pioneering attempt at diversifying education. It took into account the possibilities of economic development and in that respect anticipated the need for trained personnel. The manner in which the new degree college was started, accompanied as it was by the decline of this institute, whose buildings and grounds were wholly occupied by it, was not, therefore, a progressive step. Technical schools opened later all over the state have had an unimpressive career and one is not sure whether the twists and turns that the educational system in the state has undergone in consonance with changes occurring in the rest of the country over the last three decades or more have as much claim to recognition as the earlier attempt of over half a century ago.

A great misfortune befell my family in 1939. My mother fell ill and remained so for a long time. She had brought up a large family on very meagre resources, with devotion and great dignity. She was shrewd and intelligent and was considered a good counsellor and helper in need by her sisters and brothers. In the long years of my close attachment to her I came to depend on her as the ultimate source of everything. Life seemed to have meaning only because I had such a mother. This love was heightened by the realisation that, however skillfully she may have husbanded her resources, the cruel scars of poverty had been much too obvious and now, with the eldest child of the family becoming an income earner, a new world was opening up before my parents. If anybody deserved to relax it was my mother, and then the blow fell.

My mother had the attitudes of her time and class in regard to marriage of her children. The marriage of a son

meant his mother's gaining rights over both daughter-in-law and her parents. The rights related to, more than anything else, perpetual movement of gifts in cash or kind on all sorts of occasions from the parents of the bride to the boy's house. These ritualistic presents are part of the dowry that the girl's parents have to provide for the son-in-law and his family. My mother, having married me off, her first born child, at the young age of sixteen, expected, so I imagine, presents and gifts of a higher order than she actually received. Several other factors, all of them one can say, from hindsight, trivial, helped to produce a vicious circle, the eventual result of which proved disastrous.

My mother died in August 1939. Her illness and death caused me indescribable agony of mind.

In the late autumn of 1939 it was decided to arrange the marriages of my younger brother and sister. My mother had been looking forward to celebrating these occasions as befitted one who now had an augmented income. My brother was a postgraduate student and of marriageable age. So was my sister, the youngest daughter in the family, who had been brought up with an attention that her elder sisters had not received. I was feeling utterly desolate. The desolation into which the family was now thrown was poignantly brought home to us all when we found that there was nobody to keep the house. Our married sisters lent a hand, but reluctantly. They had their own families to take care of. Other, very close relatives apparently felt unconcerned. Dependence on servants was absolute and almost pathetic. The frequency with which we had to change them depended upon the attitude of our father. Generally he would not appreciate the critical condition we were in and would apply harsh standards in his dealings with them. The situation was unenviable

and life seemed to depend upon the existence of a servant in the house. This condition continued unchanged up to the summer of 1940, when my brother was married and there were signs of rehabilitation of the family.

I was particularly anxious that I should assist my father in marrying my brother and sister with éclat, in the sense that the dowry for the girl should be adequate and feasts should be on a generous scale. Both weddings were celebrated as I wished. My sister was married in the winter of 1939 and my brother in the summer of 1940.

In 1942 the Sri Pratap College was broken into two parts. I was transferred to the Amar Singh Degree College, as the new college came to be called. We had only two classes to care for in arts and sciences, but the number of students was substantial. These were the years of the Second World War. There were smart and able men on the staff, some young and others not so young. Some of the staff were intellectually devoted to communism. They thought they were, therefore, progressive in their outlook, whatever that meant. With an air born of self-righteousness and knowledge of economics and political science and other allied subjects, these people suddenly came to be on the side of the Allies when the USSR become one of the latter. The war was now a people's war. There was something refreshing, indeed, about what these "progressives" said. Their knowledge of events as they were happening in various theatres of the war was extensive, and the exciting discussions that took place in the staff room were a regular feature of life at this college throughout the war. I had no intention of being called a reactionary, and therefore I would chip into these discussions, which sometimes became acrimonious. The point of sharp cleavage between these forward-looking people who were very much moved by the people's war and the rest arose out

of the contention of the latter that the Allied effort did not deserve the support of the Indian people because they—the people of India—had themselves started a serious phase of their war against foreign rule, which had provoked unprecedented repression on the part of their foreign rulers. The Indian National Congress, which had launched the "quit India" campaign (in 1942), had demanded from the British a statement of their war aims in regard to India. This seemed to me plain speaking and admitted no prevaricatory answer. For if India was not sure of her fate at the end of the war, the Indian people, as Mahatma Gandhi declared, could not wish for "the victory of British arms." The people's war had to be won at any cost, so our friends argued, because in that lay the future of democracy, including freedom for India. If the evil forces let loose by Nazism gained sway over the world, India's hopes for freedom might not be fulfilled for a long time. There was much force in this position, but the other view was equally cogently held.

Apart from discussion of war and other matters of general interest there was another subject that engaged staff members, the articulate ones, in endless talk. It was a pleasant experience to have at this time a principal who was much above the common run of men. Born in the Punjab, he had, after finishing his education with a doctorate in philosophy from a German university, spent most of his working life at the Osmania University of Hyderabad. He was head of the philosophy department, and it was from that position that he had been taken by the state government as principal of our college. Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim had a very genial and lively temperament. He was a great talker, believing, as he once said, in the alchemic quality of animated and civilised conversation. Only a veritable fool should keep his mouth shut as a matter of policy, because he has nothing much to communicate. The

only other exception Dr. Hakim would make would be in respect of a man of great depth and wisdom who is always expending his mental energy thinking. The professor spent much of his time in the staff room in our midst, mixing as an academic with his colleagues. These were days of intense political stage-acting on the Indian subcontinent. The famous resolution of the All-India Muslim League demanding the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims of India had been passed in March 1940, and the tempo of politics, despite the repression of the National Congress, which had carried political activity underground, was rising again with the arrival of "missions" from England. Political parties and politicians, newspapers and newspapermen, and independent intellectuals who chose to express themselves discussed and debated the question of the freedom of India in the context of the complicating demands of the two major political parties of the country. The atmosphere of the early forties was surcharged with emotions that contained much explosive content. Needless to say, the situation was the end result of years of organised work of our farsighted foreign rulers. It would take me far afield to trace historically the growth of the separatist movement in India, how out of apparent benevolence the minorities, not only the Muslims but also the Sikhs, the "depressed" classes, and finally the princes were gradually made to become aware of the dangers that lay ahead of them in the form of the iniquities that would be meted out to them by the majority community in the event of India becoming free. Not that there did not exist differences, cultural, social, and economic, between the various communities and sections of the people. Most of these could be shown to be the result of historical forces. There were at the same time undoubtedly similarities among all of the various segments of the Indian society.

Hindus and Muslims had lived together for a long period in harmony. They spoke a common language, ate the same food, over large areas of the vast land, and had the same basic economic problems. It was obviously a question of what weight was given to either of these aspects. In a milieu of immense complexity such as existed in India, an alien government felt bound, in its own interest, to lay stress not on the things that could keep us together, but on those that threw us apart. They brought us into the ring and to keep us from destroying one another remained inside the ring, pacifying one and provoking another until time came for them, for reasons beyond their control, to stand down. They did so, but after the animosities created and fostered, which remain to this day, had brought about the division of the country.

There were people then, as there may be now, who held that the blame for feelings of estrangement being born and then growing into an ever-widening gulf lay upon the majority community. Such was, during the early days of the staff room discussions, the view of some of my colleagues. The Bania and the landlords were the villains. This, these colleagues thought, was an objective view of the matter.

Dr. Hakim was a serious participant in talks of this kind. He was himself a thoroughly liberal person, with a secular outlook, who had translated the Bhagavad Gita into Urdu or English, (I do not remember which), but he was also caught in the tangle created by forces over which nobody seemed to have control. He would sometimes relate his experiences in the matter of Hindu-Muslim relations. Once, attending as a delegate a session of the All-India Philosophical Congress, he was shocked to find that the president of the session, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, was not present at a dinner given in honour of the

delegates. The pandit would not eat with others. (It is said that Pandit Malviya would not eat with anybody, for that matter, or even in their presence.) Then on another occasion Dr. Hakim was not able to cash a cheque at a Lahore bank for the simple reason that he could not find anybody who would endorse his identity. There was no Muslim employee in the bank.

The doctor was exceedingly open-minded and tolerant. At the conclusion of a rather unusually heated conversation in the staff room, I refused to agree that partition of the country would be a solution and then in the heat of the moment added, "How can anybody with a soul perpetrate such a proposition?" A wiser colleague pulled me up, but Dr. Hakim was not annoyed. His view on the question of Pakistan was perhaps adequately conveyed when he once said, "My heart says we should have Pakistan; my head doesn't."

The Amar Singh College was a good institution. My students, many of them, at any rate, were interested in economics, and I was happy with my work. It seems these were my best years as a teacher and some of the classes included quite bright boys. I studied quite considerably. It was here that I taught political science for a brief spell to degree classes (bachelor of arts), much to the chagrin of some of my colleagues. I had qualified in this subject also in 1940.

I never wanted to rest on my oars. My keen desire to compete and advance in life was undiminished by time. I wanted to learn more economics. My reading habits being quite extensive, I was eager to obtain a doctorate. I toyed with the idea for some time of going to the United Kingdom for this purpose, but my effort in this direction was very feeble. For financial reasons primarily, the idea was very farfetched. Later I decided to enroll for this purpose

in an Indian university. At one of the universities nearer home I had one of the most unpleasant experiences of my life. My effort was welcome in the beginning, but due to no fault of mine, soon after—that is, within a day or two—my request was turned down. What hurt most was not the eavesdropping of an erstwhile colleague at my first interview, which may or may not have had somthing to do with the eventual debacle, though it was patently churlish, but the most arrogant and almost humiliating manner in which I was later rejected by the head of the department. On such occasions, as I have stated earlier, I forget I have a tongue that sometimes, rarely though, can be sufficiently sharp. The fact that this luminary, for that was what he was considered to be, had acquired notoriety in the matter of dealing with people, the number of victims being reportedly not small, was no solace. I had occasion later to witness the sad plight of a senior officer when he was, so to speak, mercilessly mauled by this "luminary" with a tongue-lashing. The officer had acted rather discourteously at a formal meeting of senior officers in the Planning Commission, but academics having acquired momentary power would normally be expected to act in a balanced manner. Rules and regulations do not provide relief to such victims as the officer mentioned above, but it is a question whether a positive response, just short of open defiance, on the spot is not a more appropriate method of dealing with these misbehaving individuals, because it is said such people are basically bullies. Such treatment would do them and others a lot of good. This, however, requires moral courage of a high order, and everybody does not possess it. In India this is particularly so. Maintaining discipline through a rigorous system of rules, combined with the ill moral and economic effects of long alien domination, have instilled in government

employees, generally, a sense of fear. There is no doubt whatever that necessary though discipline is in a well-run government, the way it was enforced undermined national character, so that even nowadays submissiveness and hard work are considered attributes of an Indian civil servant anywhere.

I had better luck at the University of Allahabad, where I enrolled as a part-time research scholar. I spent two winters and most of one summer at this well-known seat of learning during 1948–49 and 1949–50. I worked on population theories and the relationship between numbers of people in a country and its national income. My supervisor for a brief period was an American professor, C. D. Thompson, but for the major part Prof. J. K. Mehta was my guide.

I studied extensively a wide range of writers from the classical economists, including, of course, Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus, down to neoclassical ones like Marshal on population theory and then many more-recent writers. Having traced historically the connection established by these writers between numbers of people and national production, I was fascinated by the question of whether there was at any particular point of time a given number of people that could be called the correct size of population and did this size remain constant over time. More people than this number would bring down the per capita share of the population in what is produced in goods and services. This is the optimum theory of population. The lectures Gunnar Myrdal delivered in the United States of America as long ago as 1940 on the possibility of adding to gross national product with a larger population stimulated my interest. The example of India obviously pointed the other way.

I was able to secure a Fulbright travel grant in 1952, which, supplemented by a grant from the Ford Foundation, enabled me to spend one academic year at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. I could not, however, devote my whole time to my population study, though I did some work on it.

On the question of optimum population the quarterly *American Economic Journal* contained informative articles. The most impressive was that of Professor Gotwald, whom I met in Chicago in 1952 at the annual conference of the American Economic Association. A more advanced study of the subject was, however, contained in a small book by Professor Suavy of France. I was able to have the book, which was in French, translated into English by a kind American graduate student.

These are some of the more important aspects of this study, which altogether contained a holistic descriptive treatment of population theories as propounded by economists from the early nineteenth century. Analytical study was made of the relevance of these theories to conditions in India. Professor Mehta was quite appreciative of the progress made on the dissertation while I was at Allahabad, and I was not unduly elated when he observed that his contribution to my work had been limited because there was not much need for it. I attributed this opinion to his innate humility.

On May 8, 1950, I left Allahabad to resume my duties at the Amar Singh College in Srinagar. I was hopeful of completing my thesis during 1950 by adding some chapters on the actual population changes and growth of national income of India or a part of it. I was advised on this occasion by a gracious friend, the late Prof. P. K. Acharya of the Sanskrit Department of the University of Allahabad, that if I intended to complete my study I should return to

Allahabad, because it is the "environment" that matters. Professor Mehta said the same thing much later, though in a different context. I came to know Dr. Acharya through Dr. L. C. Jain of the Punjab University (economics department), who had asked Dr. Acharya to meet me when he was on a visit to Kashmir. It was he who had arranged my admission at the Allahabad University and offered me his hospitality for a number of days when I arrived at Allahabad. His words that I should try to complete the dissertation at Allahabad turned out to be prophetic, indeed, as the aftermath will reveal.

At this point I must say a few special words about Professor Mehta. He was a unique personality. His saintly qualities did not take long to make a profound impression on me. He was very soft-spoken, shy, and unassuming to a degree, his intellectual brilliance matched only by his humility. When I asked him whether Joan Robinson of Cambridge's statement in the preface to her book, *Imperfect Competition*, that some people like Professor Mehta of India had reached similar conclusions before her was a reference to him, he felt too shy to reply in the affirmative. His economics has a slant, as is well known. His conviction that economics should not concern itself with unlimited increase in wants is unshakable. I had the temerity once to refute the basis of his philosophy, only to repent the indiscretion eventually. He believed, so it appeared to me later, in the spiritual needs of man, and in a heated discussion I had laid stress on the impossibility of soul development on an empty stomach. This had hurt him. Later I came to realise that he was primarily a thinker, not only on problems of economic theory, but on matters metaphysical. He lived humbly, spending his evenings treating people and dispensing homeopathic medicines. No fees were charged. His clientele was large and patients came

from far and near. My association with him ripened into something more than a relationship between a student and his teacher. I respected him for his learning as much as for the nobility of his character, and our regard for each other continued undiminished even after I left the university in the summer of 1950. I paid a few visits to Allahabad thereafter, to see him, though the sober, quiet atmosphere of Allahabad has always had much attraction for me. When I visited him last in the summer of 1966, before I left for Somalia on a UN assignment, he wanted me to complete my work, the theoretical part of which had been almost completed long ago under his supervision, for he said that it was always satisfying to achieve something. He was too modest to talk of "creative effort" and that sort of stuff. He referred to an old colleague of his who on the occasion of his retirement had bemoaned his inability to do any original writing. Professor Mehta was at this meeting, unlike all other occasions, in an articulate mood and, of all things, was talking about himself. He was perhaps interested in making me shun the path of the grosser values of life. I like to flatter myself to think that this was so. We talked of his latest book, *The Philosophical Foundations of Economics*, and I mentioned the review that Prof. E. G. Robinson of Cambridge had written of this book in the *Economic Journal*. He had spoken about the book in laudatory terms. I could see a gleam of satisfaction in the professor's eyes when he said that the *Australian Economic Journal* had said something better. "What was it?" I asked. Though there was this and that with which "one could not agree," the journal had said, "as an exercise in pure reasoning, the book has few equals." While I was really surprised that the professor had been so very much unlike

himself in talking about his achievement, I realised deeply what real happiness comes from a creative effort. But how difficult it is to choose values correctly!

Chapter III

From the College to the Government Secretariat

We had in the state of Jammu and Kashmir a cabinet of ministers presided over by a prime minister. The latter designation continued for long years, and it seems this was one sign of the special status that our leaders had thought from the beginning was their special privilege. The more important members of the cabinet were men of ability and political experience. They were more mature than some of their contemporaries in several other states in our country. Indeed, the helmsman was well on his way to acquiring national status.

It was almost inevitable that, having struggled for political recognition and power for seventeen years, the National Conference as the ruling party in power now should have plans for social and economic change in the state. The need for this was obviously there, because the people were poor, as in the rest of the country. Over 85 percent of the people lived in the country. The party produced a document aiming at economic reform of the state. The document was neither a political constitution nor an economic plan, but it was like a manifesto that laid down economic and social goals in what one would call grandiose terms. It came to be known as New Kashmir and acquired some reputation for the impression it gave to many

that the creation of a noncapitalistic order was in the offing.

One of the basic aims of New Kashmir was land reform. The government took early measures to implement it. There were absentee landlords, not many in number, who owned a substantial amount of land. Their contributions towards production were minimal either in the form of actual tilling or any sizeable investment. Their main interest lay in the collection of their share of the produce, which was generally equal to one-half of the total quantity produced. A variety of other demands were also enforced, in the shape of personal service and gifts in kind. There was adequate justification for a radical transformation of this system. A maximum size was fixed up to which any single landlord could continue to own land. The rest was to be distributed among actual tillers. The process of implementation was long and turned out to be, reportedly, a source of much unseemly profit to government officers who were put on this "special" job. There was also the human problem of a small number of landlords, who though they would choose to till the land themselves but could not do so easily because eviction of erstwhile tillers presented an equally human problem. There may have been political undertones as well. Similarly, there were some who had not inherited the land, like many others, but who had actually invested their savings in the purchase of land.

Apart from land reforms, which were inaugurated with the pioneering zeal of reformers and which did, on the whole, substantial good to the small farmer and others, New Kashmir faded away gradually. It retained, for some time, its value as a reference point for leaders addressing large audiences.

Kashmir has always been deficit in food production.

The "green revolution" must have produced its effect on Kashmir agriculture, and its dependence on food imports may have lessened. I would, however, be surprised if the valley is able to produce sufficient food for all its requirements. One aspect of the problem is that as production begins to increase, the peasant prefers to withhold part of his crop from the market and rising prices makes this possible. His limited needs for goods other than grains are met by a smaller sale of his produce. Besides, some agricultural products acquire prestige in the farmer's scheme of consumption and he uses more of them himself. In days long gone by, when production was much lower, the peasants are reported to have wholly abjured paddy (rice) consumption themselves in certain months of the year, when they almost lived in a semistarved state. The government's policy in those days was to feed the city population. Concerning firewood and paddy the citizens of Srinagar are said to have highly strung nerves, and care is taken by governments to ensure maximum facilities in this behalf. The Srinagar Food Control Department, with its granaries all over the valley, is an old institution. The department was first started in the twenties of this century to procure, hold, and sell paddy to residents of the city.

Shortly after my return to duty at the college I was asked to write some articles on the reforms of agricultural tenancy that had been introduced by the government. The government also appointed a committee of officials and nonofficials to examine and report on the feasibility of compulsory procurement of paddy. I was one of the members and wrote the committee's final report. I imagine that this report was partly responsible for the offer the government made to me to work as secretary of the committee the government was appointing to prepare, among other things, a plan for the state in compliance, it appeared, with

the wishes of the central government, where economic planning as a technique for accelerating the pace of the country's economic development was a hot favourite. In July 1950, for good or ill, I bade farewell to my vocation as a teacher.

It is a long story, that of my new occupation as an official of the government secretariat. My anxiety to continue there, for I was only on deputation from the Education Department and liable to be reverted at any time, increased with the mounting political commotion that prevailed a year or so after my arrival in the secretariat. It was not as though there was any direct link between the ups and downs of political conditions in the state and the tenure of my new office. In actual fact, it turned out that planning itself as an activity of government was contingent upon the nature of the relationship that was going to exist between the state and the union. This relationship was far from being a settled fact so far as the ruling party in the state at this time was concerned. With hindsight I could say that the half-heartedness with which the new office of "planning" came to be treated, as I proceeded with my work, stemmed from a feeling that was taking hold of the mind of some men in power that "planning" would be an eloquent sign of the state's being an integral part of the union and therefore, after the earlier enthusiasm for the central government generated by the tribal invasion of the state in 1947 subsided, I was allowed merely to exist with a handful of staff and, of course, a political boss who was in charge of my work. More must, however, be said about this first phase of my new duties.

The Planning Committee consisted of a number of members, officials and nonofficials. My memory helps me only that far. I do not remember the number or names, nor did the committee ever meet. The appointment of the

committee was perhaps a device to keep some politicians busy and engaged in remunerative work, one of them being the boss mentioned above. For me this was the beginning of an experience that grew rich both in depth and variety as time rolled by. Planning ministers and planning boards, notwithstanding the status that planned economic development occupied in the political and social programmes of the central and state governments, came to be used sometimes as "harmless" places for inconvenient politicians who were to be provided with symbols of authority without its substance. The same use was made occasionally of statistical offices for civil servants. Ironical though it may seem, sometimes this policy failed to achieve its purpose and produced a backlash effect. One planning minister through sheer ability became a superminister, so his colleagues moaned, because he wanted the ministers to discuss with him their departmental plans and justify them before he would include them in the state plan. They came and sat through long discussions in agony, which could not be avoided, because budgetary funds were involved. There was obviously cause to relieve the minister of this work also.

Going back to my work as secretary of the Planning Committee, I must have been really bored with my work at the college, as I threw myself into my new work with real zest. Long hours of work did me no harm. Indeed, I have always enjoyed hard work. (It has always been an unpleasant experience for me to be on a job and not employed fully or effectively.) Secretariat support was limited and facilities for work on a subject like "planning" woefully lacking. There was some inheritance in the form of a few men, some of them highly disgruntled, and some data, which became a part of my equipment. At the centre

also "planning" was only beginnng to be organised. Instructions from the Central Planning Commission and occasional discussions with them helped us produce some sort of document, which we named as our First Five-Year Plan. We were trying to do what other states were doing. The effort was not an achievement, but considering the availability of facilities and lack of experience, the report, though "general in nature," as the prime minister of India described it to the leader of the state delegation, was not a bad beginning for the state. This was in the winter of 1952.

The Pre–August 1953 Period

The months immediately preceding August 9, 1953, were momentous. The political events of this period, which began their course for most people in unpredictable and unexpected circumstances, became grave in the summer of 1953. August of that year saw the removal of Sheikh Sahib, as the famous Kashmiri leader was called, from power. (This event gave a twist to the political situation in the valley and, indeed, added to the complexity of a problem that does not exist in the eyes of India but is not for that reason any less alive. This relates to what Pakistan calls the Kashmir question.) For the future historian it will be a rewarding study to research in some depth on this period in order to find out what factors, political, cultural, administrative, and, above all, those relatable to individual personalities, were causes of the happenings of August 1953.

There is, in the view of many, not much to be explored. The facts are well known. According to them, it was an act of virtual betrayal on the part of a leader who

had masterminded a secular movement in this state, which had won him the admiration of the whole country. He had sought the help of the government of India to halt the invasion of the tribal raiders who had been let loose by Pakistan, from whom they received, besides, assistance of all kinds in men, money, and equipment, and were marching on the state capital. These ruthless marauders were causing murder and pillage on a large scale, and proof was abundant. Foreign missionaries were among those killed in a gruesome and cold-blooded manner. The destruction of Srinagar with its population of over three hundred thousand people was imminent. This city was the avowed ultimate object of the attack. Its capture would have signalled the fall of the valley into the hands of the raiders, and, indeed, of Pakistan, whose leaders reportedly had plans to celebrate the coming Eid festival there. The raiders became victims of their lust for gold and women. Apparently, convinced of the success of their adventure, they decided to rest for a brief time in Baramulla, a district town. From there it was a walk of thirty-four miles to Srinagar. In that ancient city the festivities of the glorious autumn weather, when normally the year's crop of paddy, vegetables, and fruit is harvested and rich and poor choose this time for celebrating marriages, were all but forgotten, like the Dushehra celebrations. Marriages were performed on a small scale and in the midst of much anxiety. I was a close witness to all of this. On a certain day in October 1947, we were seated in the state Durbar Hall for making our usual obeisances to the maharaja on the occasion of the Dushehra celebrations. He was late in coming. What could the reason be? Then we were suddenly plunged into darkness. Gas lamps were improvised and on the maharaja's appearance the ceremony was gone through. Reaching home, I found the city dark and dismal.

Groups of people gathered, and it was learnt that the raiders had taken the powerhouse at Mahora, some fifty miles from Srinagar, and they were on their way. Thereafter, all civic life dead, colleges and schools closed, we spent our days in the sunny streets of Srinagar watching the skies for signs of succour. The city was in a state of siege, and not knowing what was going to happen or what to do, I approached one of the leaders whom I knew, for there was no police or government official to be seen functioning. I asked him exactly where the invaders were. He said quite calmly, "They have left Baramulla; we have sent some people to find their exact location. When we know we will evacuate women and children." There was a terrible streak of irony in this statement, because the evacuees were to be taken from one part of the city to another. They obviously could not be taken out of the city. Not by road, because the city had no petrol, nor by air, because the state had no airline service of any standing then. The city was entirely left to its own devices for more than one week. The minority community in the city was in great danger. I had an opportunity after the raiders were pushed back by contingents of the Indian army to see for myself the sufferings of Hindus and Sikhs in the north-western region of the valley, the part that borders the passes leading to what is now in the hands of Pakistan. Death and destruction had been visited on minorities, though there was no doubt that in the initial stages of the raiders' entry into the valley and in their early confrontations with the local population the majority community, the coreligionists of the raiders, had also suffered. One of the nationalist leaders who resisted the raiders in Baramulla was a Muslim. He was killed and became for a while a martyr. The fears of Hindus and Sikhs in Srinagar that their extermination would be complete were, however, real. The leaders

of the National Conference knew as much, and true to their faith in secular principles they sought to avert the feared catastrophe in the coming days. The chief leader (Sheikh Sahib) rose to the occasion and flew to Delhi, asking the government of India for immediate military assistance. Internally, the volunteers of the National Conference maintained law and order by functioning in place of the police both during the day and the unlighted night. The challenges thrown by volunteers by word of mouth to the invading raiders and the mass excitement shown by people, the majority community in particular, at meetings organised by the leaders showed the resurgence of real nationalist fervour and were a very happy manifestation of the people's agreement with the policies of the political leaders in their decision to resist the forces of aggression, whose real intention was to compel the state to become a part of Pakistan.

In the early months of 1947 the "princely" states had been advised, as mentioned earlier, by the British rulers that they should decide before August 15 of that year which way they wanted to go, to India or Pakistan. Advice was given also in regard to considerations that should govern their choice. Before August 15, 1947, when the Indian subcontinent came to have two countries instead of one, the state of Jammu and Kashmir had made no choice. The state had offered a standstill agreement to the two countries.

It has also been stated that when the request for assistance was received the government of India was reluctant to rush out its troops. It was on the persistent request of the National Conference leadership that Indian forces were despatched to come in between the raiders, who were by now at the very door of the city of Srinagar, and

its beleaguered citizens. The maharaja had before this, of course, signed the Instrument of Accession to India.

Coming back to the events of 1953 and the question posed before, there is, therefore, adequate reason for the position of those who would like to dismiss the question of accession as irrelevant. They describe the activities of Sheikh Sahib as a political volte-face that showed not only inconsistency of political beliefs, but ingratitude, too, towards the Indian National Congress leadership, which had in the case of Kashmir's National Conference deviated from its policy of noninterference in the politics of Indian states and overtly intervened on Kashmir's behalf, giving it political and moral support of a far-reaching character. They went to the length of refusing to listen to the maharaja when talks for accession began until he released the nationalist leaders who were then in prison and gave them an effective hand in the governance of the state. Even after accession and the removal of the raiders from the valley, the government of India pursued policies in regard to the state's serious political issues, the status of the erstwhile ruler, for instance, which showed tremendous faith of the central leaders in their local counterparts. All this was not without provoking discordant voices from political circles and others within the state and outside.

Is there another side to this picture? Sheikh Sahib believed he was hit below the belt by men of eminence holding power at the centre who not only were his political mentors, but in whose sense of absolute uprightness he had great confidence and to whom he had been devoted for long years. He was, it would be alleged, removed through a sort of political coup. Sheikh Sahib considered his removal unconstitutional, and there were people in Kashmir, intelligent and politically articulate, who thought there was substance in this contention. Similar sentiments

were expressed by some people outside the state. On the whole, reaction in the country was not very critical, though the political supporters of Sheikh Sahib obtained much encouragement from activity organised in the central capital by a few persons who were interested in the politics of the state and its secular quality. This support was placed in sharp focus by a leading personality who had, as an active National Congress worker, done valuable social work in alleviating the suffering of victims of partition in the two countries—women in particular. The removal of Sheikh Sahib was subjected to severe criticism, and a crusade was organised challenging the correctness of the decision. The leadership of this group provided a rallying point for the suporters of Sheikh Sahib and, by offering them financial and other facilities in the national capital, propagated the view that the removal of Sheikh Sahib was ill-advised and the resulting conditions did not constitute an improvement or a solution to the political problems involved. There were other respectable voices also raised against this event. Over time these voices inside and outside the state got muted, but then the politics itself underwent a sea change. New leaders, new factors and forces, began to operate on the scene inside the state, producing changes in political response from the rest of the country. Factors relatable to international relationships with their ebb and flow also played a large part. But this takes us far afield, and we are anticipating a little too much. The main question remains: is there any way of knowing what really happened to produce this momentous event, the removal of Sheikh Sahib from office? The matter is not historical at the moment. Government records cannot lend a helping hand. One has, therefore, to lean on one's observation and experience. In that way it

becomes an academic discussion and conclusions may be somewhat subjective.

As an official of the government coming into occasional contact with Sheikh Sahib, I had the advantage of knowing him at somewhat close range, though it would be a serious mistake to imply that I got to know him well or understand the mainsprings of his political thinking. Happily, however, my knowledge of men and events, though it was not intimate, is adequate for forming an opinion, in retrospect, on the direction that politics were taking.

Sheikh Sahib was kind to me and remotely interested in my work, but planning had much less grip on him than it came to have later on his successor. He assigned some problems to me for study and report and asked many visitors from foreign lands to meet me. It was, incidentally, as a result of these meetings that I learnt about Fulbright Fellowships on which people proceeded to the United States of America for varying periods of stay and work in different fields. A young professor from Colorado walked into my room. He suggested my applying for a grant to the U.S. educational foundation in India. I did. The professor also advised me that I might go to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, and work with Professor Penrose, who had done some work on population. It so happened that the foundation to which my request was forwarded by the government sought an assurance from them that in the event of only a travel grant becoming available they would finance my local expenditures in the States. Secure in the belief that I had come to acquire a certain amount of confidence of the prime minister (Sheikh Sahib) and knowing also that the proposal had already received the support of the state government, I approached him with the letter in hand and asked for his

further blessings in the matter. My request provoked a stunning reaction. He said it was not possible for him to agree to provide this financial assistance because, in his view, this amount should be spent on training people in various fields in which we had shortage of skilled personnel in the state. He named the veterinary services. The proposition was as simple as that, a matter of priority determination in allocating public funds. The matter ceased to be plain when he blew up, delivering a tirade against the central government, its leaders, and its closefistedness in giving assistance. I cannot recollect the points he made, because I felt dazed. Then for a moment it occurred to me that the nature of the meeting, with the heated words he uttered, was for me yet another step forward in gaining his personal regard. I was soon to learn how mistaken I was, but at the moment sheer self-interest kept me on my feet and I reminded the prime minister that his government had sponsored my deputation. When he replied that the recommendation could be withdrawn I did not allow myself to be completely put off from asking a favour, which was that the question be kept open. This was to save the case from being totally destroyed. He graciously agreed.

Eventually, it became unnecessary for me to seek the state government's agreement to meet my expenses in the States, since an additonal grant for the purpose became available to the foundation. The matter, therefore, did not come up again before Sheikh Sahib. The significance of the event, however, lay in the revelation of Sheikh Sahib's mind, with the new and far-reaching currents that were sweeping across it. Only a few days after the meeting he performed the opening ceremony for a small power station at Ranbir-Singh-Pora, some fifteen miles away from Jammu, the winter capital of the state. I happened to be

seated behind him. The speech that he delivered after the formalities of the occasion were over created a countrywide stir. In fact, the Ranbir-Singh-Pora speech, as it came to be called, signified a turning point in the state's relationship, under Sheikh Sahib's political leadership, with the central government. The national press presented the news in banner headlines, and there was obviously an element of alarm implicit in them. Sheikh Sahib protested that he had not been accurately quoted.

It was about this time that Sheikh Sahib asked me to proceed to Delhi and bring to the prime minister of India's notice some of the difficulties we were facing in our efforts to carry out development schemes. Our plans were in a rudimentary stage, and we could hardly boast of any important and well-thought-out projects. It should be said, however, that in this respect we were not very different from most other states. We had forwarded a scheme connected with tourism to the central government. In terms of its financial cost it was a very minor scheme, but the state government seemed to attach importance to it. Sanction of the scheme or the financial assistance requested took time in coming. There was also the question of the newly started programme of community development. For one reason or another it appeared that this programme, for which assistance from outside India perhaps was coming, was not being extended to our state. These two matters and some allied financial and administrative issues were to be placed before the prime minister of India by me. I felt the assignment to be a little too much for me. I tried to persuade Sheikh Sahib against the visit, for the inane nature of the mission's main purpose was much too obvious to me. His orders were firm and I went. It was no surprise to me to receive an almost angry rebuff from the prime minister in Delhi as soon as I had spelt out my

story. I gained substantial ground quickly, for I represented to Panditji that "time is the essence of development." He did not wait a moment to agree with me but commissioned me to call on the union finance secretary. He fixed the day and hour for the purpose, and I received a letter to this effect from him. Subsequently, my visit to Delhi acquired a dramatic quality when I entered a room full of ministry officers on the appointed day to see the finance secretary, who had gathered his minions to face me, as it were. My plaint was, indeed, simple. Officers from one or two ministries produced files in token of action taken by them in the matter and the absence of timely response from us. I was so overwhelmed by both the numbers and the comments of this assemblage of bureaucrats that I asked the finance secretary whether he and his officers thought that we had gone in complaint to the prime minister against them. His reply was quite frank. "You have," he said. "Look at this love letter."

I had also been asked to see Mr. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, who was at that time a minister in the union cabinet, presumably to enlist his sympathies in our case, whatever it was. I met him and was asked in heavy and measured words whether the state government had decided to become a part of the Indian financial system. After I had expressed my inability to give a reply either way, he dismissed me, directing me to an officer of his ministry to seek remedy for my worries. I acted accordingly and after what must have been some small talk with the officer took a tally of my achievements or lack of them and returned home to report. This episode looked superficial and vague, and it appeared that we were hammering a nut. But was it really so? An ordinary civil servant completely ignorant of the nature of the political issues of the day as these had developed between the state and the

union government would naturally be impressed by the futility of the whole thing, but that would hardly be a correct reading of the situation. Leadership in the state was not so immature as to pick up quarrels on flimsy grounds. One must, therefore, look for other reasons. This is not an easy task.

It has been alleged in certain quarters that despite their professions to the contrary, the prime force behind all moves of the National Conference leadership has been their desire to sap the foundation of Hindu hegemony in the state. The agitation against the maharaja, which eventually culminated in sustained pressure being put on the central government for his removal, is ascribed to this basic motivation. Similarly, the early abolition of landlordism, ostensibly designed as a measure of economic reform, had, it is said, a similar object in view. I heard people talk in this vein even at the time when the maharaja introduced a minor element of liberal reform in his administration by giving a place in his Council of Ministers to a representative of the National Conference. These were doubtless die-hard conservatives. They belonged to the officialdom of the time, and some of them had landed interests. It was as early as 1945 in the Kashmir valley that such critics objected to the reforms that were being enacted. Though the great majority of the minority community in the valley were by and large passive, the more articulate among them viewed with concern what was happening. It is an irony, therefore, that one of the unexpressed grievances (there are several) that Hindus outside the valley have against the Hindu minority of Kashmir is that the latter played a part in the weakening of Hindu rule in the state. This, however, is another matter and will be discussed later. The point to mention here is that to ascribe narrow motives

to National Conference leadership is uncharitable. A popular movement was bound to come into conflict with the government and the feudal character of the society. It is, however, necessary to view this aspect of the situation in perspective and a little more closely.

As a historic event the 1931 agitation started from a religious platform. The interested, though hidden, hand of the British imperial power arguably played a crucial role. There was plenty of raw material to work upon, but the most helpful factor was that the maharaja and the majority of his subjects professed different religious faiths. The objectives of the movement were laudable, but the question seems to be pertinent as to whether the agitation would have started at the time and in the manner that it did if the factor of religion were not there. After all, there were over five-hundred states in India, in most of which feudalism of a sort prevailed. There were no signs of serious political activity in them, and, as is well known, the Indian National Congress kept its hands away from them. The political movement in our state started as a Muslim movement and remained so for a number of years. The political department of the government of India felt bound to take a hand in the affairs of the state, first, apparently, to save the maharaja from destruction, and then to foster good government, and then to project the interest of the subjects. Bitterness between the Muslim subjects of the state and its ruler began to grow. Whatever the circumstances and whatever the immediate causes for the first brick to be dropped, the movement gathered speed and before long acquired a mass base in the valley. The leaders had much to talk about. There was widespread poverty and illiteracy. A rentier class fattened on the toils of the rural population, with a ruler who was ruling all by himself, responsible to none, on top of a feudal pyramid. The

congregational prayers provided an excellent setting to put across the political and social lament. In a subtle manner religious and political elements of the situation got enmeshed.

The Muslim conference was christened the National Conference in 1938. Its doors were thrown open to men and women of all religions residing in the state. This decision was momentous. It showed political sagacity and foresight of no mean order, and it was evident that whatever else may have provided the impetus for the transformation, the decision reflected the existence of streaks of high idealism in the leadership. The response from Jammu and the minorities in the valley was not encouraging, though a number of Hindus and Sikhs from the two provinces became members of the new party. This enlargement of its membership represented a qualitative change and, in a sense, gave it the appearance of a progressive and liberal party. The political struggle with the establishment was accentuated, and signs of support from the leaders of the Indian National Congress appeared on the scene. The National Congress began to agitate for "responsible government," meaning a government chosen from among people's elected representatives.

Dewans (prime ministers) began to arrive from outside the state, and we became a politically active state, though less so than the rest of the country under the British rule. The situation was in sharp contrast with that in almost all other princely states, which continued to function as of old. Some, though very few, were relatively progressive. A large number were virtually private estates of their rulers.

The decade before 1947 placed in focus the heterogeneous nature of the state's population. With occasional spurts of agitation in the valley and the eventual overt

support that it received from eminent national leaders from outside the state, the political interests of the two provinces (Jammu and Kashmir) seemed to have little in common. The "quit Kashmir" movement of 1946 launched by the National Conference completed the process of estrangement that had set in some years ago not only between the maharaja and the National Conference, but also between the former and the Indian National Congress. The two provinces also were never more apart from each other in their political and social motivations. Partition of the subcontinent took its toll on the people in the state. The pattern, however, was not exactly similar to the one operating outside the state. The tribal raiders committed atrocities of all kinds on inhabitants of the areas through which they marched, mainly on those who did not profess their religion, but their blows also fell, now and then, on their coreligionists. In the city of Srinagar the majority of the population, which was Muslim, took under their protective care the small minority of Hindus. Beyond the Banihal Pass, as the proportion of Hindus to Muslims increased, the safety of the latter was in danger and sizeable numbers of Muslims perished. Large number of Hindus became victims of the communal holocaust in the southeast of Jammu Province, which had its source in western Punjab, by then part of Pakistan.

The indescribable human suffering that preceded and followed the partition of the subcontinent and was on all accounts without parallel in history was the result of a complex of forces that had been building up for long years. There is no reason to believe that they have worked themselves out, but there is a difference in this respect between the pre-1947 era and the postpartition situation in the subcontinent. Two sovereign entities came into existence in

1947. The two countries devised their answers to the challenges of independence. Pakistan chose to be a theocratic state. The status of the minorities was qualitatively different from that accorded to the majority community. India chose a wholly different way of life for its people. In simple language, the secular character of its constitution, which is the essence of our body politic, vouchsafes to all Indians equality of status as citizens. There is nothing new in this type of social organisation. After church and state were assigned mutually exclusive roles in society in Europe centuries ago, man, it was claimed, registered a progressive step up the ladder of social evolution. Religious faith came to be considered a private and personal matter of the citizen, which does not have any bearing whatsoever on the manner in which he organises the other aspects of his life and personality. The state creates conditions in which every citizen, irrespective of his religion, is able to enjoy in the fullest measure, the privileges that its constitutional framework, legal and social, offers its citizens. This is the political content of secular democracy, and in India our constitution enshrines this. The day-to-day life of individuals, however, is subject to the interplay of numerous forces, some of them deep-rooted in people's traditions and beliefs. As a result the constitutional guarantees are prone to appear only as achievable ideals. Apart from economic factors, which by and large operate across religious stratification of society, there may be genuine disabilities that sections of people suffer, in gross violation of our constitution. This is, however, a matter that does not detract from the high social purpose the constitution sets before us, nor is there any cause for a sense of dismay. Even one of the oldest of secular societies, the United Kingdom, and of course the United States, with its minorities problem, have their share of trouble in this respect.

There is a constant struggle between forces that liberate men from the deadweight of narrow sectarian loyalties and those that bind them to the latter. Religion, it is sad to note, has been and continues to be a divider of men, making them commit crimes in its name. If we do not propose to abjure faith in secular democracy, religion has to be assigned its place in the scheme of things and all citizens in our pluralistic society treated absolutely as citizens of the same class. This would, no doubt, need social effort in diverse directions, but preeminently success would depend upon the quality of our leaders. And it is this aspect of the problem that is relevant to our analysis of the situation in the state in 1953 and thereafter.

As is well known, leaders of the National Conference, which was at the time almost wholly Muslim, resisted steadfastly the overtures of the Muslim League of India before the transfer of power to Indian hands had become a reality. In 1946 this resistance became manifest in unmistakable terms. Later, on the eve of the transfer of power in 1947, when National Conference leaders were, at the insistence of congress leadership, released from jail, their confabulations among themselves and with other important local elements centred on the question of accession, which meant a choice had to be made between the pull that religion exerted on their affections and their faith in a future in which Muslims and non-Muslims would have equal chance to live and grow. There is reason to believe that there were voices raised in favour of Pakistan. Indeed, an emissary travelled to Lahore presumably to probe and explore. The final choice was for India. When Pakistan forced the issue by allowing and assisting the tribal invasion of the valley in October 1947, Sheikh Sahib flew personally to Delhi asking for assistance. Such is the genesis, in brief, of the tie-up with Delhi that the people's

leaders and the ruler of the state brought into existence in that fateful month of October and in circumstances that were certainly not the creation of India. Before we discuss the character of the secular philosophy that informed the activities of our leaders in the valley and subsequent developments in it, we have to pass through a period in which things in the state were in a flux. This was inevitable in the wake of conditions generated by the invasion. Fighting the raiders soon meant an Indo-Pakistani conflict, which continued up to January 1949, when a cease-fire agreement was signed through the intervention of the United Nations, with whom India had lodged a complaint against Pakistan.

For about one hundred years the state had known peaceful conditions in which law and order prevailed. Within the framework of the social order in which the economic and political interests of the dynastic rule were the principal determinants of policy the government was reasonably efficient.

The administrative chaos that followed the sudden and complete break with the past in October 1947 was awesome. In Srinagar for some time even the otherwise ubiquitous policeman was invisible. There was no electricity. The valley depended normally on such essential goods as cooking oil, kerosene, sugar, salt, and tea, to mention only some of them, and on trade with some of the adjoining provinces of the state. The main artery of the trade was the Jehlum Valley road, which ran a distance of 121 miles through the state and after another sixty-four miles touched the nearest rail head, at Rawalpindi, now in Pakistan. There was more traffic on another road (B. C. Road), which joined the valley with Jammu. This road, running through the south of the valley and over the Banihal Pass at a height of over nine thousand feet, reached Jammu

after covering a distance of about 200 miles. Between Jammu and the nearest rail head at Pathankot there was a distance of about 60 miles, but there was no paved road. As a result, goods traffic was almost wholly confined to the Jehlum Valley road. With a war going on and even otherwise, there was no question of the goods reaching the valley from the Punjab over this road or our exports being carried as before. Private carriers were either requisitioned to help in the armed conflict or stranded in parts of the state that were no longer accessible. The scarcity of salt, sugar, and oil was acute, and virtual famine conditions prevailed in respect of these goods. The fortunes of the black marketeers rose high. Schools and colleges were not functioning for quite some time. Government offices in the valley were in a state of utter disarray. Many civil servants had left the valley, in the wake of the marching tribesmen, looking for safety in Jammu and beyond. There were also people who had left their posts at places they feared were about to fall into the hands of the invaders and swarmed into Srinagar.

The enormity of administrative tasks that faced the National Conference leaders was overwhelming. They claimed they had picked the government "in one of the better known thoroughfares of Srinagar." So it evidently was.

Some kind of an order could be seen to emerge within a few months of the attack. A transport organisation was established to build a physical link along the Banihal road with Pathankot in the Punjab. This was obviously a matter of the highst urgency to relieve the condition of shortage of goods in the valley. Offices and other institutions began to show some signs of life. The movement of goods into the valley and their distribution made life a great deal easier as the winter of 1947 wore on. I did have saltless

meals for a brief time. But the very fact that we were breathing freely again and sleeping at night took away much from the sharpness of the deprivation. In May 1948 the new administration celebrated with much fun and merriment the fact of being "free." This showed the return of much normalcy, though it was difficult to guess what the joy really was due to, freedom from the British or the dynastic rule or from the raiders. The war was still on, and the economic condition of the valley was in a bad state. Exportable goods piled up, fruit and timber alike and, tourism having come to a standstill, there was much unemployment and distress.

Three years (1947–50) were years of enthusiasm, turmoil, and a creeping cynicism. Freedom was celebrated and much interest was shown by deed and word of mouth in condemning the raiders by, apart from the more prestigious leaders, younger ones, some of whom later came to play an increasingly important role in public affairs inside and outside the state. They moved with, in the early days of "self-government" or "people's rule," a common expression those days, rifles worn as almost permanent appendages to their bodies and were always solicitous of people's welfare, asking them on street corners and everywhere whether they needed help. There were speeches galore, some of them from platforms where the prime minister of India also spoke, the purport of them being to emphasise the economic and political aspects of accession. There was enthusiasm also in implementing economic reforms. Land ceilings were imposed, and an army of officers went into the field to appropriate from the few and give to the many, with a good amount of fat greasing their palms in the process. There was turmoil not in the form of social unrest, but there were important social issues demanding solution, and these affected large sections of

people. Anxiety about availability of necessities of life was only one of them. There was much difficulty for quite some time in getting out of the valley by road. This gave a claustrophobic feeling to many. Large numbers of government employees who had descended on the valley, leaving their jobs behind, were clamouring for work and salaries in arrears. There was a sizeable number of refugees in the valley who had escaped from occupied areas of the state. This problem acquired larger dimension after the hostilities ceased in January 1949. The plight of the petty artisans whose art products would not sell, like that of the small fruit merchant, was pretty bad. Such was the condition also of big dealers in these goods and of the large timber merchants. Apart from the disastrous effects of the resulting breakdown of the economy on the finances of the government, the people involved added their wail to the supplications of others for favours from the "popular government."

The new administration called itself the Awami, or "popular," Government. Popular government it was made to appear, because political power was in the hands of the leaders of the National Conference. Sheikh Sahib became for some time the head of the administration and, as stated earlier, later prime minister. He and his colleagues working as ministers in various spheres of governmental activity put together the administrative apparatus and met the challenge of the extraordinary situation that faced them with a fair measure of success.

Besides the top men in the party's hierarchy, whose political status was well known, there surfaced a number of men who began to throw their weight about and were soon placed in responsible positions in the administration. They were men of different abilities and character, having had association with the National Conference in the past.

It appeared as though these hangers-on, as many of them were, were being rewarded for their past interest of one kind or another in the activities of the party. One has to realise that it needed courage to take interest openly those days in the activities of the National Conference, which were quite often antigovernment. Moreover, the exceptionally difficult nature of the responsibilities that had now devolved on the leaders led them to choose men on whom they could rely. Based as these appointments were, therefore, on party considerations, they came to possess a political odour, so that these worthy functionaries came to have two faces, one political and the other administrative. Obviously, this could not be healthy for the state civil administration, its morale and general tone. In other ways also, and over a long period of time, the ill effects of this policy were felt.

The state administration in those early years after the partition of the country spent its time and energy in rehabilitating itself and relieving the conditions of those sections of the population that had suffered seriously from the collapse of the external trade. Much attention was also devoted to importing in government-owned vehicles essential goods, storing them, and distributing them in the valley. While hostilities with Pakistan continued, a supply of labour to the army was also an important administrative activity. The government's own revenue resources had shrunk while the size of public expenditures was increasing. The deficit must obviously have been made good by the central government. It is conceivable that in view of the conditions generated by the emergency that the government was facing there was a good amount of loosening of the checks that in normal times operate to ensure propriety in public expenditure. There were reports that there was misuse of public funds and important people were

blamed. Improper conduct of public business by men in high places involving pecuniary gratification was, by and large, a rare thing in days of personal rule in the state. It was perhaps natural now, with so much turmoil around and so many people asking favours of diverse kinds, that financial misconduct on the part of public servants showed a tendency to increase, and it was not confined to lower strata of government employees which was a common feature of the old administration. All this and much more led to dissatisfaction among many people, and as the early euphoria of 1947 wore off there was evidence of growing cynicism among them.

There were other unsavoury aspects of the sociopolitical situation of these years. After the early jockeying for ministerial positions was over, there seemed to have been some kind of a conflict between two top leaders of the party for the second place in the Council of Ministers, that is, after Sheikh Sahib. These leaders were a study in contrasts. One of them was made out to be a man of action, wth robust common sense. He was reported to have made a mark during military operations at the new state border when war with Pakistan was in progress as an intelligence aide involved in the deployment of troops. So the reports went. As a result, he came to the notice of the union government as an able leader of men. He had been for many years associated with leaders of the Indian National Congress, with some of them quite intimately. The other leader was a trained lawyer who had, besides general ability of an above-average type, the gift of a facile tongue, which he used to great effect, with the help of much wit and irony. He had been the architect of economic reforms and had acquired much knowledge of the rural economy of the valley as a revenue minister. He took much interest

in the workings of his department and, apart from politicking, looked at the administrative duties of a minister much as a minister of former times would. As a result, the direction of his interests seemed to be towards evolving an efficient system of administration in general and that of revenue in particular. The two leaders belonged, so to speak, to different universes. Their allegiance to Sheikh Sahib and India was, however, for the time being at least, a binding factor. But when on Sheikh Sahib's departure for New York to attend meetings at the United Nations headquarters in 1948 the mantle of his duties as head of the administration fell on one of them, the other, the revenue minister, had reasons not to relish it. After some time the former (Bakhshi Sahib) was officially designated as deputy prime minister.

The problem state of India, as Jammu and Kashmir was at the time, was said to be in the charge of the prime minister of India, the home minister, who dealt with the erstwhile "native states" having acquiesced in the arrangement. His noninterest in the state did not, however, result in his complete isolation from the problems of the state. There seemed to have developed some kind of a rapport between him and Bakhshi Sahib, and the designation of the latter as deputy prime minister may have stemmed from this relationship, and in this decision it was now perhaps the turn of the union prime minister to acquiesce. Sheikh Sahib may have blessed it, too. There is wide agreement to the view that this event affected seriously the mood and attitude of the revenue minister, who felt his desserts were denied to him. He was an ardent supporter of the state's accession to India, and I heard him speak in laudatory terms at public meetings of the heroic deeds of the Indian army in protecting the state against

tribal aggression. What a tremendous change had overtaken him by the time he delivered a tirade against those who were talking of Jammu and Kashmir becoming a part of India much as the other states were. He was speaking in the state constituent assembly, and the emotion-surcharged speech was apparently meant for Dr. S. Radhakrishanan, vice president of India at the time, who was watching the proceedings from the visitors' gallery. Sheikh Sahib rose to say a few words in low tones, but not in rebuttal of the revenue minister's statement that "Kashmir will never, never become a part of India like other states." The revenue minister said this, however, after much more water had flown down the bridges after the appointment of Bakhshi Sahib as deputy prime minister. Mention of this event is made only to bring out the fact that the seed of deep resentment that Bakhshi Sahib's elevation had planted in the revenue minister's mind made an easy convert of him to causes that he would in all probability otherwise shun.

The first few months or more after the October 1947 raids were, for purposes of history, a sort of dark period in the annals of postindependence Jammu. All communication between Kashmir and Jammu remained suspended. There was very little knowledge in Kashmir about events in Jammu. Much has been said about the violence that prevailed and the sufferings of Muslims in Jammu Province during the brief period immediately after the tribal invasion of the valley. There is no authentic account of this period available, but it is known that so far as National Conference leadership was concerned, its hands were too full with the reordering of affairs, political and economic, in the valley to think of Jammu. The National Conference had no roots in Jammu anyway, and the rump of the maharaja's government functioned there for some time.

It was not long before the new state administration asserted itself in Jammu Province. For obvious reasons it was imperative that the writ of the National Conference government should run throughout the state. Jammu's political importance as a part of the rest of the country and the physical link it provided with Kashmir would compel attention. Jammu's economic interests also would indicate that it possessed a hinterland. Extension of authority across the Banihal Pass (the pass over the mountain that separates the valley of Kashmir from Jammu Province), however, could have taken a different course from the one it did, which may eventually have proved to be happier. Conditions in the valley were difficult, and the resources of the administration were under much strain. It was, all the same, an extremely ill-advised step to take, whereby a sort of *mansabdari*, on the old Moghul style, was created and the administration of Jammu handed over wholly to a single individual. The power that was as a result concentrated in one person and considering the circumstances in which the province was at the moment, there was considerable mismanagement of public business. This is perhaps a gross understatement, because widest possible resentment among people in Jammu resulted from this experience, with much anguish in the hearts of men.

The Jammu region is the homeland of the Dogra dynasty, which ruled over Jammu and Kashmir for a hundred years. Though the state's army was entirely raised in the region, to whose young men it offered great employment opportunities, it cannot be said that the peasant or the worker in Jammu was living a better life, in the economic sense, than his counterpart in Kashmir. The feudal order of society relegated the majority of people all over the state to a life of toil and poverty. Even so, it seems there was a feeling of pride in belonging to Jammu. This

was obvious among the elite, composed of officers of the army and high-ranking civilians. On the collapse of the maharaja's rule in 1947 the poignancy of the loss affected them deeply. And when the National Conference leaders appeared in the seat of power the feelings of despondency were further exacerbated. In the early days of transition, it seemed people in Jammu had hopes of having the maharaja back in position and they gave expression to their sentiment in no uncertain terms. Pandit Nehru was on a visit to Jammu when he was confronted with a demand to this effect through placards displayed at a public meeting. The prime minister's ire was roused, and he admonished the large gathering with the words: "The maharaja will never come back." Even great and popular leaders can wrongly take their audience for granted sometimes. So it was in this case. Events have amply shown that the people did not respond to this advice as was intended. On the contrary, some bitterness was planted in the minds of many, which has persisted.

The National Conference with its very flimsy position in Jammu Province soon came into conflict with the Praja Parishad, which had come up as a well-organised party with the ostensible object of protecting the interests of Jammu. The party was exploiting the near chaotic situation in the province and the economic difficulties of the people that arose out of the breakdown of the old order and the war that was being fought. Later, administrative practices being what they were, it took the National Conference government time to find the ground under its feet. It was not, however, given any quarter by the Praja Parishad. The basic factor being psychological at the moment, grievances took a serious shape and the party and the government came into an open clash. This happened in 1950. There was use of force by the government, and the people

went through much suffering. At a critical time such as the period was, when all ranks should have been closed and concerted efforts made to reshape the administration and the economy of the state and present a common front to disruptive forces both inside and outside the state, what actually happened was that a vicious circle was born out of the events mentioned above. The National Conference embarked on an enterprise of much worth and value with the noblest of intentions. They had chosen a path of secularism at a time when the protagonists of the two-nation theory inside and outside the state were asking them to do the opposite in the name of religion. In this task, namely, to persuade Kashmiri Muslims to become Indians, they were being frustrated, it was alleged, by an important member of the party, by the Praja Parishad, whose main activity should have been to strengthen their hands. On the other side, the Praja Parishad lamented the woeful lack of sympathy shown by the National Conference for their problems. There is no doubt whatever that the intransigent attitude of the Praja Parishad in presenting a point of view that, by being openly Hindu, ran counter to the basic principles of the National Conference, which were noncommunal, did weaken the nationalistic efforts of the Kashmir leaders. The fact was obvious that to ask for the abrogation of the articles of the Indian constitution whereby special status is conferred on the state was untimely and ill advised. The Kashmiri Muslims should have asked for this abrogation, and those who might have over time been able to bring this about were thwarted. Sheikh Abdulla did feel unhappy about this attitude, and as it happened, he also began to ask himself questions. It is only fair to add that apart from the damage that the new administration did to the reputation of the National Conference in Jammu, a besetting sin of the National Conference government was that they did not appreciate the

psychological aspects of the Jammu problem. However awkward and "irrelevant" the state of Jammu's mind as reflecting their sense of deprivation of political power was, they deserved sympathy during the period of transition.

The combined effects of the discouraging features of the working of the administration in the valley, the infighting in the party, and, above all, the Jammu political developments culminating in the Praja Parishad agitation embittered Sheikh Abdulla a good deal. Pro-Pakistan sentiments in the valley had been only temporarily driven underground, and elements inimical to the accession of the state of India, for which Sheikh Abdulla had been mainly responsible, began to exert their subtle influence on him when they found conditions were becoming propitious for such exercise. Among such influences one has to count also the gratuitously offered advice of professional sycophants. It seems that the union government also contributed its mite, indirectly though, in the direction events were taking. Questions like accountability for financial assistance received by the state from the central government and the desirability of extending the Supreme Court's jurisdiction in some matters to Jammu and Kashmir seem to have been raised. The air in 1952 was thick with such talk. There were also pronouncements of national leaders on the subject, showing anxiety on the part of the union government to hasten the complete integration of the state with the rest of the country. That the public was not just making wild guesses was confirmed by the announcement that the National Conference leaders had arrived at an agreement on important political issues with leaders in Delhi. This was stated by Sheikh Abdulla at a large meeting of senior ministry officers. He talked of several matters, chief among them being the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court over the state. This so-called Delhi

Agreement was, before the fateful August 9, 1953, the last effort on the part of the local and national leadership to bring about some improvement in their mutual relations, which were nearing breaking point. Despite the public announcement, the agreement was the subject of intensive debate and discussion between Sheikh Abdulla and his senior colleagues in the party. It was known also that the advice of legal pundits, not only of those belonging to the state but of eminent persons outside the state, was available to Sheikh Abdulla. It seems that the whole matter was being discussed from a perspective that, so far as the political principles of the National Conference were concerned, was astoundingly novel. Was accession on lines suggested by the union leaders good for the state?, it was asked. The obvious religious overtones of the discussion, which failed to reconcile the different views on the subject and officially confirm the Delhi Agreement, were placed in bold relief by one of the participants, who was reported to have complained at the conclusion of the hopeless meetings that secularism had been buried.

Then followed a train of events that were external manifestations of the sorry state of affairs within the party. The harsh reference to the union government that Sheikh Sahib made when I submitted my request for government assistance for my deputation abroad and the highly disconcerting speech he made at Ranbir-Singh-Pora—these two matters have been mentioned earlier—were followed by more acrimonious statements. There was the question of the failure of some young men in a test given by the post office, a national agency. This should not have happened, it was stated, which could imply anything like deliberate mischief being played by the concerned authorities or that the standard should have been lowered, the latter being the less hurtful of the two insinuations. Soon after

the partition of the country, Sheikh Abdulla on paying a visit to a Muslim locality in Jammu was faced with aggrieved persons who had complaints to make. He told them that they were themselves to blame for their misfortune because they had supported the two-nation theory of the Muslim League. This attitude was now a thing of the past. It was quite common for Sheikh Abdulla now to mention the fate that Jammu Muslims had suffered at the hands of Hindus, time and again, in the midst of a variety of political matters that he may be discussing from a platform. In the spring of 1952, when I was spending my spring holidays in New York, I chanced to have a long talk with a highly distinguished Indian. Among other things, this development in Sheikh Abdulla was referred to by the dignitary, who told me that while addressing a meeting of the Congress some time ago—perhaps it was an AICC (All India Congress Committee) meeting at Bangalore—he had strayed into a discussion of the Jammu events when Muslims were reportedly killed in 1947. So galling and irrelevant did the reference appear at the time that Mr. Nehru, who was present, remonstrated with Sheikh Abdulla about this out-of-the-way reference. The latter, indeed, did see the point. The painful nature of these utterances stems from the fact that Sheikh Abdulla was forgetting to mention the happening in the Mirpur District of Jammu Province, where Hindus went through a similar experience. After all, this was a period of madness all around of which all right-minded persons have reason to feel ashamed and the best one could do was let these scars lie in the subconscious of the national mind. But that was not to be. It was made to appear that a new look at the accession question was necessary because the future of the Muslims of the state could not be considered safe and secure in a country that had elements hostile to

Muslims in its body politic. To whom, it was also said, could Kashmiris look for sympathy after Mr. Nehru was no more? In this completely changed mood Sheikh Abdulla gave free and wide rein to his thoughts. He thought of "independence," it is said, as a possible way out. Though he later stated he had been indulging in a bit of thinking aloud and no public reference to it was subsequently heard from him, the statement did cause some stir when uncharitable critics attributed it to yet another influence on him more sinister than the rest.

We come to the end of this analytical exercise to find out the reasons for Sheikh Abdulla's new political stance that led to his "deposition" in August 1953. This has been a long exercise, partly historical and partly academic, with a fair measure of my own views on important public issues of the time. The conclusion seems inescapable, that the National Conference leadership at the highest level cracked up under the stress caused by internal, that is, of the party and the administration, and external factors.

To repeat, after 1946, when the Muslim League passed its resolution on Pakistan, secular principles of social organisation were exposed to grave danger. The Indian National Congress remained steadfast in its adherence to these principles, and so did the National Conference. After independence it was realised that there were elements in the country that were not as clearly wedded to the principles and constant vigilance was, therefore, necessary so that no serious damage to the cause of secularism was permitted. Sheikh Abdulla had no reasons to believe that the forces making for secularism were weakening. There were then, as there have been since, attacks on it, but to buckle before them, whatever the circumstances and the provocation, was to weaken the very hands that were fighting unfavourable elements on a large

scale and expose oneself to the charge that the foundation of our leaders' faith in secularism was weak. Such, in my view, was the case in August 1953. Events have amply shown that the fears of those who were not sure of the course of events after the Nehru era were misconceived. Not only does the Congress continue to have faith in secularism unwaveringly, but in other ways roots of a pluralistic society seem to have been well laid.

In September 1952 I left on a Fulbright Fellowship for the United States of America. The parting advice of Sheikh Abdulla to me was that I should, while in the States, speak to people on the question of Kashmir's accession to India. I should tell them he advised that our main consideration was economic. I should, I was further asked, keep in touch with his government. In spite of all that was happening there was no intention on our leader's part to snap the connection with India. His faith in the essence of secularism was not a thing of the past.

Landing at La Guardia Airport in New York, I sensed I was in a new world. A young American freelance journalist who had come to have some regard for my contribution to her professional work while she was in Kashmir had made arrangements to have me received in New York. Though a message was delivered to me at the customs, such was the rush and my excited state that I missed the lady, who had come to the airport. She had, however, thoughtfully left word for me at the terminal office. Luckily, I managed to contact her and with her assistance reached the safety of a comfortable room and highly hospitable company on my first night in the States. The next morning, I was put on a deluxe coach at the railway station for my trip to Baltimore, where I was told my professor would be waiting for me. At the busy station I was advised to look for a big blue board under which the learned man

would be waiting. At the Baltimore station I missed both the board and the professor. I got into a taxi and asked to be driven to the campus of Johns Hopkins University. I was obviously feeling jittery for fear that if I did not reach the relevant office before sundown I might be in trouble. So I asked the driver to drive fast. American cabbies are usually warm and courteous, but this one was a very poor example. He shouted back that he would do so if I "shelled out fifty dollars." I was able to reach the campus in time for an officer to direct me to the home where a room had been fixed for me. I drove to this place and met the landlord, not a very pleasant person, and his very kind and polite wife.

I spent one academic year at Johns Hopkins. Prof. E. F. Penrose, who was my guide and supervisor, had worked on population theory, making a special study of the Japanese population, during which he spent some time in Japan. He was professor in the economic geography department, and though a trained economist from England—he was perhaps from Cambridge—he did not seem to have much rapport with the economics department, nor had he much interest in the mathematical method as an economist. Indeed, he described it as "snobbish." I divided my time between Professor Penrose, who guided me in my population studies, and Professor Maclup, an eminent economist who headed the economics department. Professor Maclup was a German emigrant and one of the most distinguished economists in America. Like Viner and Haberler and a number of others, he had fled his country and the Nazi terror. They were now at the top of the world of economics in America. Professor Maclup was a true professor in his learning and with a gracious appearance, and his lectures were a treat. He was a great stimulator of ideas and sometimes asked his

graduate students to come to the board and explain their views. I remember how perturbed he was one morning. He did not begin in the usual way but referred to a judge who had just delivered a convocation address. The judge had suggested that the professors at American universities should teach about true values, that is, about fundamental facts and verities of life and somthing like that. This was a time when liberalism was sweeping through American universities. Several professors were actively supporting Mr. Adlai Stevenson in his presidential campaign. The convocation address may have been directed against this wave, and the professors were perhaps admonished that this should not be their cup of tea. Professor Maclup expressed his sense of horror at this and said that somebody should ask the judge to "jump in the sea," for he asserted that he hardly knew what was the truth and that he dabbled in ideas and what they led to.

Professor Maclup showed sufficient interest in me, but I guess this was mainly due to his high sense of courtesy towards a foreigner. I say this because I was considerably disheartened when he told me quite early on during my stay at the university that I should not think of obtaining a doctor's degree from his university unless I first got through the B.A. degree. That was the university regulation. This was too much for me to try with my three M.A. degrees from India. He encouraged me, however, to pursue, besides my population studies, work in any other branch of economics that I thought might be useful to me in my work in India. I chose the problem of the place of small-scale and artcraft industries in India's development. Kashmir was particularly in my mind. Professor Maclup gave me his ideas on the subject, one of them being that we should not expect any substantial change

in economic levels of living of people through development of artcrafts alone. He made particular mention of Yugoslavia in this behalf. I also studied extensively the theory of capital movement between countries. This was one of Professor Maclup's special fields of interest. All told, my gain from association with the economics department was only marginal.

My main work lay in the economic geography department, and Professor Penrose was eager to be helpful. He saw me through the papers I wrote on optimum theory of population and wanted me to read Professor Suvy of France's work on this subject, which I did.

I had one peculiar experience during my association with my supervisor. His courtesy and interest in my work were unflagging to the end, but he did not like to hear from me the remark that the British connection with India had resulted in economic exploitation of the latter or, more specifically, that India had become under British rule a country producing primary goods that were traded in exchange for finished goods from the United Kingdom. This latter statement was, according to him, an economically unscientific argument for the simple reason that trade always took the channel in which its maximum profit-earning potential lay. This was the old theory of comparative costs. The complaint of Indians in this behalf, according to him, was more attributable to young Indians, whom he had heard before, allowing their emotion rather than economic reasoning to have the better of them. True to form, on one occasion, right in the middle of a paper that I was presenting at a discussion group, as I expatiated on the economically harmful aspects of the British connection with India, my professor left the classroom. When the discussion was over, Dr. Lee, another faculty member

who sat through my paper, offered sympathetic comments. He seems to have later spoken in laudatory terms to my supervisor, who without being apologetic for his abrupt exit from the classroom expressed his high sense of satisfaction over what Dr. Lee had told him about my paper. The students were even more pleased, particularly the German student, who was a little too extravagant with her words of praise. The semester on economic development of underdeveloped countries was quite rewarding, with the rich contribution papers and discussion with the participants and faculty members made to our understanding of the problems of economic development in their general and particular settings.

I was asked by the authorities of a private college (evening division) to participate in a series of lectures at the university organised by it on foreign policy of my country. It was my professor who had recommended me for this selection. There were distinguished people from other countries, and though I certainly did not develop cold feet but accepted the invitation readily, it was an American friend, a graduate student of sure ability, who was apprehensive. He thought if I strayed into socialism or communism, subjects I talked about with him, I would land myself in trouble.

The lecture hall was full, and several age groups were represented. I had reason to feel satisfied with my performance, as was my anxious friend, who wondered how I had managed to skip socialism completely. The lecture had, however, a brief moment of unease for me. At question time, one young student asked me, "How far is it correct to say that India's policy of nonalignment is based on her fear of China?" This was as early as 1953, and when we remember that our foreign policy was then, to quote a journalist friend on the editorial staff of an important

American daily, "characterised by some as being procommunist neutralist," the relevance of the question was evident.

It was time to think of my plans. The Ford Foundation wrote to me asking whether I was interested in extension of my fellowship. My supervisor was in favour of my staying on. There was trouble in my home state. Jammu agitation, I learnt, was getting worse. More than this, I was getting homesick, and so I decided to return.

Before I close this account of my Fulbright Fellowship I should anticipate a later event and mention a three-week seminar on development economics that was organised by the American Education Foundation in Delhi, India, in the early summer of 1963. The seminar was directed by an eminent economist from Berkeley, California. There was the ritual of the opening speech and the first lecture, both by reputed economists. Then on subsequent days we had talks by selected speakers, Indian and American. I have always been highly sceptical of the value of these wise discourses. Since there are different speakers on diverse topics, the lack of a common thread between most of the approaches to the central problem makes a hodgepodge of the entire activity, and I have no doubt that the impact on the participants in terms of addition to their knowledge was hardly commensurate with the effort that had gone into the organising of the seminar. I had chosen to attend the seminar chiefly because I wanted a break in the tedium that is the lot of those tied to desk work, day in and day out, and undoubtedly also possibly to refresh myself on economic planning, with which I was so much concerned in my state. Whatever my gain in this respect, I could not but feel depressed with the general attitude of the leader. A staunch believer in the virtues of free economy, as he seemed to be, he was not able, in spite of the

encouragement he gave to participants to discuss matters freely, to conceal his disapproval of Indian economic policy, whether it related to licensing of new industries or economic planning itself. The sarcasm that invariably accompanied his comments on these and similar topics was most annoying. At one point when someone talked of a certain decision of the Planning Commission he asked him, "Who or what is the Planning Commission?" The flabbergasted gentleman could think of no better answer than: "Let us ask the Planning Commission Office." All attending Fulbright scholars except myself were university teachers. I felt seriously handicapped by my sense of service discipline, and I wondered why the academic people did not protest. Or it may be their understanding of the leader's attitude was different. On the whole, I deeply regretted having attended the seminar.

All old benefeciaries of the Fulbright programme in India would remember Dr. Olive Redrick, director and the kingpin of this programme for many years, with gratitude. Her dedication to the task of promoting a cultural relationship between India and the United States and the warmth of her friendship with Indians never failed to impress those who came into contact with her. She was not only an administrator of the programme, but she had the true nature of a teacher, continuing her interest in the scholars even after they completed their courses. I would always cherish her memory with respect and admiration.

Back home in mid summer of 1953 I took the earliest opportunity to call on Sheikh Abdulla. He received me warmly and made clear his intentions with regard to my future employment. Before I left for the States he had been approached with a request from the Education Department that I be returned to it so that I could teach in the postgraduate economics department in Jammu College.

The move was stalled at that tme, but Sheikh Sahib perhaps thought I would be more usefully employed as a teacher. He therefore wanted me now to be ready for working at the Srinagar University campus, which he said was being organised. He said that I might at the moment report for duty in the Planning Department.

Politics in the state seemed to be in a more critical condition than they were in the previous year when I left the country. Relations with the centre had reached a breaking point. Again in his forthright manner, Sheikh Sahib wanted development works to be slowed down. This was a pointer, though ambiguous to a stiffening of attitude on the part of the state government. All doubts in this regard were laid to rest when it was directed that only such programmes be taken in hand as could be financed by local resources budgeted for the year. After a few more unfortunate events, the curtain fell and the first chapter in the state's postindependence history came to an end in August 1953 with a suddenness that took most people by surprise.

Chapter IV

The Expanding Role of the Government and the Indian Bureaucracy

Before I pass on to my many years spent in the government secretariat, a brief discussion of the principal features of the modern state and the factors responsible for rapid growth in the activities of government and the part played therein by the bureaucrat would be worthwhile to provide a meaningful background.

Many years of struggle between kings and their subjects bore fruit in the shape of representative governments that were formed in various European countries, in some sooner than in others. While men thus became, over time, free from the shackles of despotic rule of sovereigns, changes in the arts of production were producing results in a contrary direction. As factories and cities began to grow, a new sense of social responsibility dawned on government, which gradually began to make laws regulating the economic life of their people.

Western societies have now become increasingly complex as a result of ever-changing technology, accompanied by institutional changes in forms of business ownership and management. With the enormous increase in production, workers have claimed and obtained a progressively rising share of the national product. The cohesive spirit

displayed by workers in the developed countries has transformed the erstwhile underdog into a powerful force, and the social and economic complexities of modern industrial societies are in no small measure due to the pressure and influence that organised labour is exerting on governments that are as far removed from being communist as any government can be.

In democratic societies the ancient tug-of-war between the state and the individual is, apart from basic freedoms of the individual, working very much in favor of the latter. This, it must be noted, is happening in the interest of the community as a whole, though it is designed primarily to serve the special needs of the weaker sections of the community. Thus we see the interesting spectacle of bureaucracies expanding with increased governmental activities in Western industrial societies in the face of established policy to take the government off the back of the citizen, and this is so even in societies where privatization of economic activities has gone to extreme lengths, as in Britain and the USA.

Our experience in this country shows the same trend, but there is much difference, too. In the recent past, as we were a colony, the government did only as much as it thought was necessary to keep the empire in proper shape so that imperial interests were served. About two hundred years of foreign rule resulted in impoverishment of the country, so that in 1947 we were a land of tillers of the soil, by and large, with our illiteracy rate almost the highest in the world and most people living in poverty or economic distress. The general belief is that not only were our industries, such as they were, allowed to decay (conditions were, in fact, created for this), but industry and agriculture were linked with the economic interest of the "mother country." There was under the circumstances no question

of the government stimulating economic activity with a view to adding to the income of the individual citizen. This attitude of pathetic indifference to our economic interests was, undoubtedly, a major cause of our backwardness in 1947, which became the legacy of free India.

It is obvious that free India's foremost obligation to its people was for the government to take steps to induce economic change. This has been happening since 1951 at an increasing tempo. Our five-year plans represent an effort on the part of the government to bring about faster use of resources in directions laid down by them than would otherwise be possible. Consequently, government takes a large hand in determining what shall be produced, that is, how capital and labour shall be employed. The private sector of the economy is also subject to control, in the sense that private investment also has to conform to sectorial priorities given in the plan.

We also have to consider the implications of the socialist philosophy, which the government has adopted as its main guiding principle. There has been so far no official statement regarding what this philosophy means and how the objectives it represents will be achieved. Thus it happens that not only does the government swear by socialism, but the socialist parties avow faith in it, too, as they are bound to. The three communist parties are, of course par excellence, believing in socialism of a variety that, according to them, is the only true stuff. Even the BJP (a national political party) lately has given a socialisitc orientation to its politics. Socialism thus means different things to different people. This and the deliberate vagueness in which its true content and meaning are allowed to remain in official statements of the government are not, to put it mildly, helping development. The private sector is haunted by a sense of impending doom, though, true to

its nature, it has no intention of laying down arms. The public sector has expanded considerably, and with the food grain trade taken over partially by the government it can be said that socialism, in the main, means the government taking increasing responsibility in the production of goods and services.

Distributive justice is another commonly heard objective. The need of the hour is, it is affirmed, not only to produce more but to give to poorer sections of the community more of what is produced. A further wish is expressed in the demand that differences in the various levels of income should be substantially reduced so that the lowest income is not so far away from the highest as it is at present.*

The point to emphasise is that in contrast with the responsibilities of the government prior to independence, there has been an unprecedented increase in the activities of our government. The business of government, as stated earlier, has been increasing in the developed countries of the West, and so it has also been increasing in the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. The reasons for this and the independent purposes that the governments in the latter countries are aiming to serve differ from those of the former in one vital respect. Namely, the developing countries almost universally believe that left to themselves, their people will not be able to bring about that quick and substantial improvement in their general economic well-being that they have been expecting for quite some time. Indeed, everywhere in these developing countries people think that gaining independence, as most of

*There have been some serious changes lately in the government's management practices of the country's economy, but in substance the statement made remains true.

the countries had been under alien rule, must mean an improvement in their economic condition.

Germany in the nineteenth century and Japan later followed a different path from the one that Great Britain had chosen earlier in the matter of industrial development. Governments in the two former countries took "partial interest" in helping private investors start new enterprises, but it was nothing like the new way chosen by USSR at the end of the First World War and by China after 1949. Total control of resources and their deployment combined with a single-party state characterise these two societies.

We have, in a sense, chosen a diluted form of economic planning, giving rise to a vast, pervasive bureaucracy. We allow the private sector to exist and have opted for a multiparty state. We seek to plan for economic growth within a democratic system, which implies the existence of free institutions like a free press and an independent judiciary, freedom of debate in and outside parliament, and enjoyment by people of other basic human rights. (It needs to be stressed, that while evaluating the achievements of planning in India and its future potential these two factors, the existence of a mixed economy and of democracy, should be given special weight.)

It is tempting to dwell on the subject a little further, though I would appear to be going too far afield. The matter is, however, of much social significance, and I have spent a large part of my life either reading about or teaching the political and economic aspects of planned development in a parliamentary type of society and, in a modest manner, formulating and overseeing development programmes.

The inevitability of planning in India was obvious. Savants like Visvesvarya of Mysore, who had a lifetime

of administrative experience in the field of development behind him, wrote on planning in the first quarter of this century and its relevance to India. This was the first study on the subject, and its main value lay in indicating the promise that planning held out for the country. During the Second World War a few industrialists produced what came to be known as the Birla Plan. This plan broke new ground inasmuch as it talked about total outlay over phased periods in various sectors and the annual rate of growth expected. The Indian National Congress under the inspiring direction of Jawaharlal Nehru set up a number of committees to collect data on natural resources and formulate proposals for development. Valuable reports were published before 1947. Later the constitution itself indicated lines for economic growth and the first prime minister of free India seemed to consider economic planning as a panacea for the economic ills of the country. By becoming chairman of the planning commission that was appointed in 1952, he imparted it considerable moral prestige. Much interest in this new activity began to be taken by state governments where planning departments were established and planning gave a new dimension to administrative tasks.

Procedures for planning by state governments and for drawing assistance from the central government for their plans were gradually evolved. The national plan was sought to be built from below and its success, it was stressed, all along lay in the popular enthusiasm that its implementation evoked. After some time, democratic decentralisation as a method of associating people at the village, block, and district levels with formulation and execution of projects and schemes was designed to give practical shape to the concept of planning from the grassroots.

For over thirty years planning by central and state

governments has represented a vast national effort at development. Private entrepreneurial effort has also been sizeable. What has been the result in economic terms? It is not easy to formulate a brief and conclusive answer, though much discussion of a polemical nature has taken place. The severe strain on the economy and the widespread distress caused by high prices and shortages of most commodities for everyday use have made a rational judgement on the impact of planned growth difficult. There can be no doubt, whatever, that much progress has been made in laying a foundation for industrialisation. Agricultural production has also received an impetus in the form of innovations of various kinds that have been introduced. Altogether, it can also be said that the economic condition of several sections of the community has also improved, but we need not seek the assistance of the economist and the statistician to hold that most people are as bad as they were. The most intractable of questions therefore follows: could we have achieved better results with the investments made so far, and with the hindsight thus gained what economic, social, and political remedial measures, which one would like to say must be far-reaching, are necessary if the compulsions inherent in the present situation are to be met with any hope of success? This would by itself constitute a study.

First, about bureaucracy, the American expert Paul Appleby, who examined and reported on the functioning of the government of India some years ago, observed that the Indian administration suffered from excessive bureaucracy. What is a bureaucracy and what makes it excessive? In a rather simplistic sense, a bureaucracy is the entire executive apparatus with the help of which the government enforces the laws and regulations that are enacted from time to time to enable the government to achieve its

aims and goals. The goals may be few and limited in range or ever-widening, as we have seen. In this sense, every government functions through a bureaucracy and all executive personnel are bureaucrats, big and small, though in popular parlance a tough and unrelenting boss alone may receive this appellation. But bureaucracy is excessive, in the sense that given the work to be done there are more people in it than essential. For this several factors are responsible. First, the hierarchical structure that was left behind in India, for instance, by the British was quite pyramidlike, with a wide base, a bulging middle, and a narrow top. This structure was further complicated by the addition of new steps to the ladder, like those of special officer, additional secretary, special secretary, advisor, and so on. Lower below, the number of designations was larger still, so that in a small state like Jammu and Kashmir there were over 180 grades at one time in which civil service employees were placed. Second, Parkinson's Law has operated. More and more jobs have been created, which would have happened in any case, but under the impact of five-year plans new categories of posts and more jobs have been added to the payrolls of governments at a pace that has increased from time to time. In fact, in this state at one time it appeared that annual plans when cleared with Delhi led, as a first response from executive agencies, to demands for more posts. There was, on the surface, reason for this, but very late in the day, and, without much practical gain, it was realised that new projects could be started with little or no addition to existing staff. This was preeminently true in respect of projects that aimed at extension of existing activities. Whatever the reasons, a striking feature of this government—and it may well be true of the central and other state governments—was that there were far too many men engaged in work of various

kinds of government organisations. This was true more noticeably in respect of tasks that were purely administrative in character.

Too many persons and too many steps on the ladder typify the system, which is overlaid with a thick lace of rules and regulations. They constitute a veritable forest that has grown over the years. Its growth has been fostered with care so that reform and improvements signify not weeding out of overgrowth, but addition of depth and variety to what is inside the forest. These three elements, the numbers, the hierarchy, and the rules, constitute the essence of our administrative setup. Add to this the role of the individual functionary who may be a messenger at the door of a ministry officer, one of the officials in a large hall, or the head of an office. The nature of his personality is of much significance. There is a type, though. The typical official is egotistical and considers himself a symbol of government authority. He is aware of the fact that though he is part of the system and has some contribution to make, he is in no way responsible for clinching the issue before him and assuming responsibility for the final decision. The system does not give him that power unless he is at the helm of affairs or somewhere thereabouts. He is content with applying rules or precedents and passing papers on to another desk or to a higher echelon. Even if he happens to have the status and the power to finalise a proposition, he may prefer to play it safe by hedging himself with opinions from other departments or seeking orders of his superior. No functionary, at the same time, wants to surrender his "right" to offer an opinion, that is, "to record his note," to use secretariat language. The large number of notes, quite often repetitive and not very relevant or conclusive, is the direct result of an overburdened bureaucracy. Attempts at cutting down the number of

desks that a "paper," more appropriately the file, must reach, lying there for some time and later encountering new faces and attitudes, have been made by the central government and constitute the crux of the problem of administrative reform. Reductions in personnel, which would result from such efforts, are bound to come up against strong resistance from those affected. No such serious attempt has been made in this state.

Then there is the attitude of the bureaucrat. Whatever his status, he hardly thinks of himself as being a servant of the public. We have not, despite the pontification on the subject by all and sundry, outgrown the complex that government employees developed over a long period of time in the past. This attitude was adequately expressed by an officer of the state government when he referred to a certain conspicuous person who had something to do with him officially and said, "Everybody must bow before the chair." This officer was considered well educated, and the person expected "to bow" was a businessman of some status. Yet another apparently meaningful and revealing piece of advice that a promising official who had caught the eye of the highest officer in the department received from him may be mentioned. The departmental chief was rated highly for his rich administrative experience and qualities of character. He was about to retire when he called the young man for a final conversation. Among other things he told him solemnly, "Look. Be careful not to dispose of the matters with which you may happen to deal all too quickly and entirely on their merits. If you do so, nobody will take you seriously." This was perhaps advice for raising questions on the file so as to obstruct its smooth movement. In that way one becomes effective and one's "power" is felt.

It is not as if the bureaucracy is authoritarian only towards private citizens. Its own members, the large mass of functionaries of all grades and categories, are also its victims, like the rest of the community. Hardly is it possible to find a government employee who during his span of service will not have at one time or another groaned and grumbled over what he believes to be the harm caused to his interests by men who administer the system. The irony of it all is that the grumbler may himself wittingly or otherwise be doing the same thing to other members of his tribe. The long story of a civil servant's privations comes to an end only when he bids farewell to his service, but then also not without suffering the worst of all ordeals. For very many of them, particularly those low on the ladder, the ordeal is agonising. Preparation of the pension case epitomizes remarkably well the worst features of the governmental process. Heroic efforts have been made to soften the impact of rules for the preparation of the service record leading to the issuance of the final payment order, and much change is discernible.

It is a common belief among people that in one's dealing with the government one cannot leave things to take their own course. "The paper will just not move," is not the opinion of just the disgruntled and the cynical, but is a widely held belief, as much by members of the public about the manner in which the administration functions as by government officials themselves. It is difficult to say that this belief is wrong factually and stems from the distrust and aversion people generally have towards authority, except that there is a good amount of exaggeration in it. Papers do move but quite often very slowly and ponderously. And as is well known, the papers may be lost in the process, beyond all hope of retrieval. To guard against this, and in order to quicken the movement of the

paper, "following up the paper" by the interested party has almost become a built-in element in the administrative system. This is quite apart from the darker aspect of the motivation in this effort, which involves corruption and is designed to influence official decisions.

I have had to pursue personal matters in government offices but very rarely. It was, however, on one occasion during 1948 or 1949 that I realised how brutalising the encounter with a government official can be. I found myself in front of an official in a secretariat department. He was a senior colleague of mine, both of us teaching in the college and had the status of what is called "gazetted officer." He had arrived before me. He had apparently made his request and was told in all seriousness that he had come to the official only so many times—the number was cited—and his case could be taken up only when he paid so many more visits, and the number was given again. I was amused and left.

In the winter of 1949 I proceeded on study leave from my duties at the Amar Singh (government) College to the University of Allahabad to do research work in economics. I had already spent a term in 1948 at this university. My family was with me, including my old father. We were living a life of spartan simplicity, trying to live within the emoluments I expected to receive from Government in the form of half-salary and some daily allowance, which study leave rules allowed in those days. In all, it made a modest sum of not even five hundred rupees a month. Including my father we were three adults and two children, aged five and two. The going could be good, but, almost insignificant staying power as I had, everything depended upon whether I received the money while I was in Allahabad. I wrote to the concerned authroities and privately to a concerned official and to a friend. I received no money

during this term of six months in Allahabad. What was equally painful: not a line in reply was received from any quarter, official or private. The anxiety and moral frustration that resulted from this financial embarrassment are a haunting memory.

Much of what has been said above pertains to the period before the British left India and when Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state. There has been no qualitative change since then. The problem, besides having deep roots, has a cultural aspect, and mere exhortations cannot alter modes of thought and behaviour. If anything, there has been a fall in the old standards of discipline and responsibility. More and more work pours into public offices, which sometimes requires new skills and abilities in various fields. Despite an increase in the number of employees, the number of those able and willing to deliver the goods is not adequate to dispose of the increased workload. In a measure, the government's policy of recruitment and promotion rendered unavoidable by the changed social and political situation in the state has been responsible for this result. A limited number of public servants bear the major brunt of work almost all over the administration while the overall size of the establishment has increased.

Chapter V

Social Conditions in Jammu and Kashmir State in the Early Years of the Century

In the old order of things, government service, being a symbol of status and power, was the close preserve of some classes and sections of the population. Policy and circumstances played a part in it. The army being wholly reserved for one section of the population, the higher positions in the civil administration were given away almost invariably on the basis of proximity of an individual to the ruling family or the landed gentry. Such posts were ultimately filled with the approval of the maharaja, sometimes on his initiative. The large number of other jobs were given to people who could successfully pull the relevant strings. In the later twenties a whiff of fresh air blew over civil administration. The maharaja decreed that only residents of the state would be recruited to civil services. This was not as chauvinistic as it may appear now. Over long years there had been a steady inflow of men from outside the state, so that even very minor positions came to be held by such persons with indifferent qualifications. In addition to this change, services of an able administrator from British India were obtained. Sir Albion Benerji, who was appointed as minister, introduced a system of selection, followed by training abroad, for recruitment in a

number of fields, including professional and technical services. Though this arrangement did not become, in its original form, a permanent feature of the government's recruitment policy, it left its mark on the state administration by making available a number of qualified people in various fields like general administration, medical and public health, and engineering. It also created in the public mind an awareness of a rational and fair system of recruitment to public services. Despite these measures, entry into public services and its composition continued to exist as before. The social organisation of the state in 1931, when serious public resentment against the government erupted for the first time, bore marked features of a feudal order in which the top stratum, in numbers an insignificatnt minority, consisted of the army brass and big landlords and the bulk of the population lived on and tilled the land. In between there was a middle class, the upper part of which consisted mainly of the top bureaucrats and the lower one holding within its folds the large mass of government employees, small businessmen, and a small number of absentee landlords who generally combined vocations like government service with the functional interest of a rentier class. The size of the latter was considerable, and its numbers were quite a contrast with those of the bureaucrats, much as the tillers of the land far outnumbered the landed gentry. There were a few, not more than a half-dozen, factories, mostly owned and run by the government. The factory-going population was consequently very small. It was an acquiescent and stagnant society.

The social stratification was rigid, there being very little mobility among the various social layers. I was born in one of the lower-middle-class families of the minority community in the Kashmir valley. As a minority with a

centuries-old tradition of spiritual and intellectual attainments, their numbers have been a hampering factor in their corporate existence and prevented them from playing an adequate part in the economic and political life of the state. Good Brahmins all, whatever their economic conditions, they gave their young an education, not necessarily in their Scriptures, the education in scriptures having gradually become unpopular, but as much literary and cultural training as could enable them to earn a living by serving the government of the day as scribes and teachers. There has not been over long years much qualitative change in the pattern of their life. Business and industry have remained, by and large, outside the pale of their interest. This deeply ingrained trait of a fondness for government service is probably as much due to religious and social taboo against manual pursuits of all sorts as to the natural desire of a community, very insignificant in numbers for economic security and survival. This has been very unfortunate inasmuch as much moral damage has resulted from this lack of diversity in their economic interest and being almost entirely confined to the lower categories of government service has instilled in them habits of subservience and an unhealthy dependence on the goodwill of the government. More than this, an unsavoury reputation for improper conduct in public service so far as it can be said to be peculiar to them—very wrongly, though—should, in a large measure, be attributed to this feature of their social life. It was also inevitable that other large sections of the people who remained tied to the land they tilled in conditions of relative poverty or to petty trade and artcrafts and to the large number of tasks considered low in social status but essential to the life of society would, as time passed, ask for education, government jobs, and other social amenities. This happened and the

minority community found itself in much trouble. Even the doors to lower categories of government service, which they had almost monopolised for long years in the valley, were difficult to open. Getting into the higher range of the bureaucracy had always been difficult.

Such was the environment in the state when I returned in 1930 from Lahore after completing my postgraduate studies in economics.

Chapter VI
The Years 1953–1966

These were momentous years of my official career. I became a part of the bureaucracy, coming rather close to the place where ultimate power lay. I spent quite a long period in this position, as a result of which I acquired knowledge about how the executive functions in an incipient parliamentary system of government and of the ways of the politicians and the impact they have on the life of the individual citizen. Making compromises without letting up on principles was throughout this period an extremely difficult and unpalatable experience for me, because quite often I had to face up to what in my view were clearly acts of wrongdoing.

Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad became prime minister of the state in August 1953. There were some new faces in his cabinet, but important members of the previous cabinet, barring two, were in the government. After a few months devoted to party matters and important administrative problems, the new leaders set in motion a concerted drive for economic development of the state. For this the opportunity was ample. The programme of planned development initiated by the union government, as described earlier, had begun to assume importance, though we in the state were not participating in this process in the same measure as citizens in other states. Under the new political dispensation in the state, Jammu and Kashmir came to be

treated on a par with the other constituents of the union. This was a significant event in the economic history of the state. It also resulted in tangible benefits to me. I will have occasion to discuss several aspects of the actual process of development later, but at this stage it need only be said that the resulting advantages, financial and other, from the new political relationship were exploited to the maximum by the dynamism that Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad's leadership provided. Whatever other features characterised this decade, and there were dark ones, indeed, among them, there is no controversy about the extensive development that took place. All parts of the state came within the ambit of this process, and many fields were covered, though some received greater emphasis than others. It is difficult to contest the claim that this decade was Bakhshi's decade of development.

I was appointed secretary to government for works, irrigation, and power in addition to planning in October 1953. From 1950, when I first joined the Civil Secretariat, up to this change I was, in a sense, on the periphery of the secretariat. I was designated, except for a brief interval, as planning secretary, but since, as I have already stated, the government was not very keen about planning and its implications, financial and political, my activities were not taken seriously by government departments. I had an acute awareness, besides, of the impermanence of my position in the secretariat, of which the Finance Department took good care to remind me occasionally. Though now I continued to function as a deputationist from the Education Department and had, therefore, only temporary status, I felt much happier. There was work of a satisfying nature to do because of my association with important government departments, which had new projects under formulation and implementation. I began to acquire better

appreciation of the various factors that smoothed or hindered the progress of a project. I was involved also in the working of the secretariat as a whole and came to understand the nature of interdepartmental relationships and their contribution to what is called the government process. The Civil Secretariat is the apex executive organisation of a state government and, in a sense, the architect of its administrative decisions and even permanent policies. The chief secretary is the senior civil service officer of the government and heads the organisation.

By August 1953 the secretariat had a settled shape. The disorderliness that followed in the wake of the 1947 upheaval had been almost wholly controlled. Dislocation caused by deficiency in staff—some important posts yet had to be filled—and the setback that normal functioning of offices had encountered seemed to be things of the past. Some existing departments were broken up and some wholly new, like Planning, established. There were also new faces at high and low places, like mine, who owed their position to general overhaul of government establishments both within and outside the secretariat. Requirements of public business necessitated this as much as other considerations not so rational.

I started work in my new post with a number of advantages, one of which was that I brought to it a new attitude of mind. I was full of enthusiam, and above all, much idealism inspired me to work hard, with devotion and absolute probity. I was clear in my mind as to what I should and should not do in my dealing with officials, members of the public, and the disposal of official business in general. All these were aspects of my attitude mentioned above and, in a large measure, stemmed from the sense of disgust that had been growing in me for quite some time. There were, however, a few handicaps, too.

In the administrative setup of the state prior to 1947 the hard core of the bureaucracy was composed of the ministers and the officials of the secretariat. The direct entry into the higher categories of service in the secretariat from the rank of superintendent to the position of the secretary was, to the common man, as arcane as it was beyond all questioning on the part of the citizen. There was nothing open about the manner in which top positions were filled. And in whatever way its personnel were raised, the secretariat was a vital part of the establishment and it had all the attributes of a caste. All other classes of civil servants belonged to a different universe. Teachers and lecturers in colleges, for instance, were there, too, but they were a group of people not to be taken serious notice of. There would be frequent mention of the ancient guru-disciple relationship, but in the eyes of the establishment as much as in social estimation the teachers carried a low value. This was not surprising. Times were placid. There were no social or economic challenges to be faced. It was not necessary for men in authority to keep abreast of happenings beyond what they must, and there was a complete lack of awareness of or interest in the long-range needs and aspirations of the people. Not much education of a liberal or technical nature was required to do a secretarial job, and even men with a university education generally allowed the contents of their mental box to rust. Glued to their desks they drew satisfaction from the enjoyment of power and the comfort and even the arrogance it bestows in various proportions all along the line from the ministers down to the office orderly.

After 1947 the ministers who were previously chosen by the maharaja and were quite often men of ripe experience and ability were replaced by politicians. They were

National Conference leaders who were virtually thrown into positions of power in the wake of the tribal raid of October 1947. Several of them were men of much political experience, having been engaged in political struggle with the maharaja's government for seventeen years. A good number were, however, hack workers of the party, poor in education and poorer still in principles of any kind whatsoever. The secretariat, after being in a state of flux for some time and after some dilution took place in its personnel, as stated earlier, adjusted itself to the new situation. Otherwise there was not much difference between the new and the old establishment.

I landed in an inhospitable environment. In 1950 as a temporary entrant for the specific function of economic planning, which sounded new and academic to the secretarial ear, I did not cause as much raising of eyebrows as I did in 1953, when I seemed to be heading for the sanctum sanctorum. There were some who had been working in ordinary positions in the secretariat for long years, were educated, and had experience. The notes of one had attracted the notice of the then prime minister. But he could hardly manage a step upwards on the ladder. I was a mere "professor," as I was characterised during my early days as secretary in the Public Works Department by a senior engineer. This rude and obscurantist behaviour truly reflected the stuffy and ignorant atmosphere in which I was to function. To consider the matter charitably, besides a little malice there was the feeling that I had no administrative experience and might therefore prove unequal to my duties. There was perhaps more of the former, for it should not have been easy for me to gain my first admittance in 1950 but for the assistance of an officer who had come from the government of Uttar Pradesh (an important state in India) to assist my state government in organising

its information department. This officer sought the assistance of academic people to write on some topical social and economic issues pertaining to the state. I wrote on tenancy reform. This article earned me a little goodwill from him, which later facilitated my selection as secretary of the Planning Committee. This visiting officer, being on a brief spell of duty, found his work uncongenial and was planning to return to his parent state when he was appointed chief secretary.

My difficulties made their appearance sometime after August 1953 and with the transfer from the state of the chief secretary mentioned above. I was secretary to government for the Department of Planning, Works, Irrigation, and Power all right, but I soon discovered that I was working under a shadow. This shadow was a symbol of the worst features of the secretariat bureaucracy I have described above in some detail. The shadow and I parted company only as the decade whose major events I am recording was about to end. Various were the ways in which the shadow cast its influence on me, always, to put it mildly, a source of much discomfort to me. To this I will revert as I proceed.

Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad was the minister in charge of my departments, but there was also a deputy minister with whom I had to work directly. I had good reasons to be happy about this arrangement. The deputy minister, as I shall refer to him throughout this narrative, had been for a brief period my student, and it was with him that I started work on planning in 1950. As I mentioned earlier, though I was then secretary of a committee I functioned virtually as secretary for the Planning Department, with the deputy minister directly in charge.

The deputy minister was young, having taken keen interest in social and political issues of the day as a law

student at Lucknow University, where he had by virtue of his keen intelligence and an extraordinary ability at forming close friendships acquired high status in the student community. He did not, however, spend his time wholly in academic and cultural activities, which helped him acquire qualities of leadership, but he seems to have extended his scholastic interests far beyond his immediate aim of obtaining a law degree. When he returned home, his interest and proficiency in languages, English and Urdu in particular, and his knowledge of social and political philosophy provided him with the cultural equipment whereby the contours of his politics began to be formed. His belief that society can be just only if private ownership of capital is abolished was tacit in the short work he reportedly made of his ancestral property and in his pronounced social sympathies. He was, besides, completely free from inhibitions of any kind. He joined the bar but was among the handful of non-Muslims of the valley who threw themselves into the political struggle launched by the National Conference in late thirties. I met him casually in 1946 for the first time since his school days. He was on parole from jail, where he had been serving a sentence for participating in the "quit Kashmir" agitation of the year. He was later one of the major workers of the National Conference during the hectic and perilous days of October–December 1947, when the raiders, though their main thrust had been thwarted, continued to infest some pockets on the borders of the valley and conditions in the capital city of Srinagar were almost chaotic. He showed little interest in taking up service permanently under the government, for after a brief spell as home secretary he was back in the ranks of political leaders and workers waiting for offices with political power. Eventually he landed with the Planning Committee as its leading light and was designated deputy

minister. In the imbroglio of 1953 he figured prominently, and in the new administration he was given the Public Works and Home departments besides Planning. He continued, however, to be a deputy minister.

Generous to a fault, the deputy minister was urbane and gave his officers all the trust and confidence a civil servant could wish for. Of all the politicians with whom I worked, or otherwise, I found none who came anywhere near him in showing serious respect and consideration for principles in administering a department. There was certainly an air of detachment about him, too. I discovered, however, as I came to understand him better, that there was beneath his veneer of politeness and democratic manner a streak of arrogance, a reluctance to think that anybody could be as bright as he was, be it in drafting a note, organising a department, or overseeing the implementation of a project. Sometimes I became keenly sensible of this and the feeling put much strain on me. He had almost inexhaustible patience, but though his loyalty to friends was unquestionable, he was prone to be lacking in the quality of forgiveness. My association with him, which lasted for over a decade and passed through many ups and downs, was an enriching experience for me. He was not one of the large number of pedestrian politicians with whom a civil servant works, colourless and some a heavy burden for a sensitive person to bear. The various phases of my relationship with the deputy minister will be discussed again.

Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, my minister, was different in many respects. First, the common points may be mentioned. His mind was sharp and his capacity to grasp complex problems considerable. His organisational and administrative competence was admittedly of a high order. The outstanding trait of his personality, however, was

his ability to make quick decisions and an overwhelming passion to "get things done" by brushing aside all obstacles. He would move across the length and breadth of the state like a whirlwind, meeting people everywhere on a level of equality, listening to their requirements, and leaving behind an impact that helped the people as much as it did him personally. The development process was undoubtedly quickened. The economic condition of the people underwent a change perceptibly for the better.

The *bakhshi* was generous at heart and full of the milk of human kindness. He had a forgiving nature, too, but a very harsh temper and occasionally allowed his emotions to take complete control of him. What was, however, very unfortunate was his scant regard for rules and procedures. He would have no compunction to ride roughshod over them, often, it must be said, in the interest of obtaining quick results. This well-intentioned looseness of attitude slowly took an aggravated form when it made its appearance in sensitive areas of the state administration where established principles of management were flouted. This had disastrous consequences very significantly for the *bakhshi* himself. That, indeed, was a tragedy, for though he was the central figure in the drama, a host of cronies, within and outside the government, became his helpful tools and in the process exploited the situation to their personal advantage. In the event his own share of social and political opprobrium was judged, even in the context of national norms, disproportionately heavy and the good he did has been allowed to die with him. More of this later.

Politicians can become close friends with surprising alacrity and fall apart with equal ease. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad and the deputy minister had known each

other for some time as coworkers in the National Conference before 1947. Then they came closer to each other. The latter was slowly trying to find political ground under his feet. After hostilities with Pakistan ceased in January 1949, his role for some time was that of a junior politician of promise. He seemed to be quite close to Sheikh Abdulla, whom he held in high esteem. After a little jockeying, which was inevitable, he was able to obtain his first political post, as deputy minister, in 1950. The situation created by political developments in the valley that soon took an anticentre turn offered him a chance to put his faculties into action. One could see clearly in the summer of 1953 anxious concern writ large on his face. What was happening was, in his view, not good for the central government nor for Kashmir. The cataclysmic change of August 1953 saw him and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad very much hand in glove. In the new setup he was saddled with much greater administrative responsibilities than before and was the deputy of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad (the new prime minister). But the friendship between the two was to end soon.

I now had a number of administrative departments to deal with. But the secretary for these departments was not, as elsewhere in the country, their head. He had no administrative or financial powers over the internal management of the departments. The chief engineers were responsible to the ministers and got their major issues settled through personal contacts with them. Consequently, the secretary continued as before 1947, in a sense, to be the minister's secretary and much of his time was spent in receiving and shoving forward files of a routine nature dealing mainly with personnel problems, appointments, review petitions, and appeals. This work was thoroughly boring and beyond yielding knowledge of the

workings of the department, it hardly impressed me. My chief interest, however, in respect of this work, was to do whatever was possible by way of expediting the movement of files. Yearly processing of departmental budgets also provided some relief. There was, however, an area of work that compensated for the disheartening business of dealing with files. With his unerring eye on the major problems of the Kashmir valley, namely, its pressing need for economic development, which would provide work and income for its people, the deputy minister and I, in the company of competent technical advisors, toured the valley in order to identify areas where more grains could be grown principally through improvement of existing irrigation facilities and starting new ones. I came to understand the peculiar nature of our irrigation system and that large sums that were or might be spent on improving Kashmir's natural waterways yielded doubtful economic gains.

It was during this period that a sizeable lift irrigation project on the Jhelum River was proposed to bring under cultivation a large area of land for the first time. The project was conceived and technical details were prepared and implemented under the supervision of the deputy minister. Doubts were expressed locally and by the central government about the economics of the project, but the fact that the project is running today after about two decades should establish the validity that was claimed for it at the time. We also tried to study the power requirements of the valley and the potential for meeting them. There were some problems of irrigation in Jammu Province. These received close attention. Technical and economic studies were undertaken and tentative decisions made. Work in the Planning Department was infused with a new life. For one thing, a beginning was made in utilising financial

facilities that the centre was offering and the plan was organised on the lines that the Central Planning Commission had laid down. There was better coherence and coordination in the state plan, though it was still a humble attempt, being the first ever attempt made on the all-India pattern.

My working conditions left little to be desired, particularly because my academic interest in development remained alive and we thought of and discussed alternative ways of achieving results in certain fields, like irrigation and power, and gave practical shape to some. This was, in the main, the result of the deputy minister's interest and guidance. The initiative quite often was his.

The ephemeral nature of this state of affairs took some time to become apparent to me. The "innocent professor" that I was, I was very slow in understandng the devious ways in which the workaday world functions. Of the propensity of the politicians to clash with each other I had scarcely an idea. Even less could I imagine that the relations between the *bakhshi* and the deputy minister would come under a strain within a brief period, after August 1953, until one day while putting up files to the former I received from him a treatment that was neither expected nor justified. He ran into a fit of bad temper and threw away the files.

It has always occurred to me that the institution of deputy minister, whatever its political relevance in the scheme of things for a chief or prime minister, has an awkward aspect. Often the minister does not want to part with some part of his business, as a whole, and allot it to his deputy. If he does, the work may be of too minor importance for the deputy's ego to be satisfied, and the deputy takes to sulking as a result. If distribution of business is not laid down in advance that may leave much to

the discretion of the departmental secretary, leading to equally bad results for the administration. In my case there was no preplanning for the division of work between the two. The deputy minister used to mark cases for the chief minister (then called prime minister). These were generally important cases, routine matters being disposed of at the deputy minister's own level. There could be no serious objection to the arrangement, because Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad had an abhorrence of file work and, as I realised later, one of the toughest tasks of his officers was to get hold of him and have him attend to files, which he did once in a while after considerable chasing. He was also in touch with heads of departments in his portfolio and knew well the working of the departments.

The file-throwing incident left me stunned, but I was saved much discomfort by the deputy minister—he was not present, as far as I remember, when the incident occurred—when he came and told me that Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad's expression of anger was really aimed at him. He must have spoken to the *bakhshi* also, so that at my next meeting with him *bakhshi sahib* apologised for his behaviour. The incident represented for me, however, the beginning of a long episode of stress and strain that culminated many years later in my seeking transfer from the state to the centre almost on the eve of my retirement. I came to know for the first time that there was tension between the two ministers, which as it grew into a conflict caught me in its tortuous course. That, however, was yet in the future, but presently I had to contend with another force, which emanated from the shadow I mentioned earlier.

The chief minister had his own secretariat, which was mainly meant for cabinet business and general administration. The chief secretary was his advisor on administrative

matters and was closest to him. When the chief minister showed no signs of softening his attitude towards me I became more alert and looked for his reasons. These quickly became known. The chief minister began to talk in innuendoes while doing my files, his advisor often present. Such remarks as "only residual matters come to me" and "administration is a difficult matter" left me in no doubt that both the deputy minister and I had lost status with the chief, and while in my case he was quite obviously echoing someone else's words, there were other factors responsible for the tension that was developing among the chief minister and the deputy minister and several of his other colleagues. It was not easy to know much about such factors. It never is. One could, however, base fair conclusions on some external manifestations of the gathering storm. The political infighting within government always spills over to the administration, and if it continues steadily there is not much doubt about some of the causes of friction.

The chief minister could not get over the belief that he could do anything or, at least, much that he wanted to do in administration. This inevitably led to his retaining as much power as possible with himself. This met with resistance in various forms. It could be that this was only a secondary cause of the growing malaise. The primary factor may have been, as is very likely, a clash of personalities. There was not, at least for the time being, much difference among them on basic political issues, but strong-willed as the major participants in the quarrel were, once it started it acquired a snowballing character. Signs of disharmony began to increase, and soon the day-to-day administration was affected. Before these developments could assume a serious form and a political event of some

significance occurred, it was easy for one side to concentrate steady fire on me and thereby score a point. A public servant can be very miserable if he feels factors other than the quality of his work are operating and made to weigh with those who hold ultimate authority over him. Thus I felt beleaguered. The chief minister's pinpricks were ascribable to prejudice born of my close association with the deputy minister, with whom his own relations were getting strained, and the advice he was receiving on the sly from those in his secretariat who thought I was an interloper. (In the manner of the wolf and lamb fable, I was reported to be particularly responsible for such defence as a senior engineer put forth before a committee enquiring into his work on a project, because he was my close friend. Even what this friend's friend did was related, in the eyes of this advisor, to my existence in the secretariat. When these assumptions were formulated and put in the ear of the chief minister his response was sympathetic. There was no question of anybody caring to enquire whether the imputations had any basis. I was summarily asked to choose between my service and my friend. Eventually nothing wrong was found in the latter's work on the project.)

The wish of the chief minister to take away from my charge the Public Works Departments, in the beginning expressed casually, became insistent after some time. The deputy minister had steadfastly stood against the proposition for quite some time, but before long he was faced with an accomplished fact. I had been in this post for over two and a half years when one morning in the spring of 1956 I was called by the chief minister to his residence. The advisor present as ever, the chief minister told me that in place of the Public Works Departments I would be in Charge of the Finance Department, in addition, of

course, to the Planning Department. I was quite impassive, but when later I met the deputy minister who had similarly been informed by the chief minister on the previous night, he did not appear happy over the matter and advised me that I should take the change stoically. As I have stated, I appeared quite unaffected by the news of the change. Maybe I thought it was for the better. Thus ended one period of my service in the Civil Secretariat, a period that taught me as much about the working of important executive departments as about the effect of the interplay of political and bureaucratic elements in administration on civil servants. I have no more important reason than a feeling for the belief that putting me in charge of the Finance Department was the personal decision of the chief minister based on an instinctive assessment of the situation and that since in decisions of a categorical nature he was always wont to demand enforcement, his advisor was, in spite of himself, forced to retreat. My experiences of the ensuing eight years lend support to this view.

The state always has had an annual budget. There were finance ministers with offices of their own, but quite often the practice was to have a special section for this purpose in the accountant general's office. The accountant general performed the duties of a financial advisor to the maharaja's government in addition to maintaining civil and military accounts for the state. After 1947 a department was organised for compiling the state budget and offering financial advice to the government. There was a finance secretary and for some time a financial advisor.

Before my arrival in the Finance Department the men who ran it, except perhaps one, came from the accountant general's office. In the absence of any organised service, administrative or professional, these men were picked for their familiarity with government accounts and rules and

regulations. The form of the budget was what it had been for long years, a compilation of state revenue and expenditure forecasts under a classification system that was equally outmoded, bearing no relation to the complexities that outlays for development under the five-year plans had begun to produce. The form of the budget, so far as its structure was concerned, was broadly designed on the all-India pattern, but in respect of content and presentation there were differences. The plan expenditures were not an integral part of the budget but were added as an appendix to it. In these circumstances, the preparation of the budget became a mechanical effort, much as it had always been, in distributing prescribed forms at appropriate times to departmental heads to be filled, and on receipt of them the heads were to tabulate revenue and expenditures. An overall picture of actual and revised budget estimates for three years, the past, current, and coming year respectively, was then prepared and presented to the government. A lot of hack work was, neverthless, involved in these major elements of the budget and in ancillary matters connected with deposits of various categories and types and the total ways and means position of the government for these three years. But though some skill and much hard work was involved for a brief period every year, the job was, by and large, done by men of average intelligence and experience. The knowledge of and skill in keeping government accounts is helpful, but undoubtedly the value of this knowledge has been overrated and there is a danger of such experts or technicians, as I realised later, to develop a kind of vested interest for themselves and thus become virtually millstones round the neck of the department.

Just as my earlier handicap, lack of administrative experience, was a thorn in the side of my detractors, they

were equally ill at ease now for another reason. Some did not bother about my lack of knowledge in dealing with government accounts, but they could not understand how I would apply rules. My not having come from the Accounts Department was a major worry for others, some of them directly concerned with me. I did realise the good that familiarity with the theory and practice of accountancy would have done to my work, but with the help of study of relevant literature and on-the-job training I received, so to speak, with the help of an able colleague who had come from the Accounts Department, within a year I was almost on my own in regard to the accounting aspects of the budget making. Knowledge of the discipline or science of accountancy is a different matter altogether.

The budget is much more than an accounting compilation. It is, essentially, an instrument for economic management, besides providing the government the means for raising its revenues. As a constituent unit of a federal polity there is limitation on a state government's ability to influence its economy in respect of the price level, total amount of money in circulation, including bank credit, even production levels, and money incomes, but its fiscal policy has, nevertheless, a large role to play in most of these and other areas. More than anything else, if the state government has undertaken to be something more than a law-and-order-maintaining entity, it is not enough that its budget shows how much money it raises and allocates to various agencies that help it in keeping society together. Once its social and economic goals are defined, development expenditure is undertaken according to a carefully designed plan. A good plan must have a good budgetary mechanism for the fulfilment of its objectives. It has been observed that a good budget may exist without a good plan, but the opposite is not possible. A budget provides

the plan with adequate financial resources and a legal and administrative apparatus for its execution. The budget also has to be a monitoring instrument to exercise supervision on the progress of various projects and schemes. For this purpose it is essential that all projects are easily indentifiable in the budget and have been so fitted through adequate groupings into the accounting system represented by the budget that progress reporting for the purpose of control and checking becomes easy and smooth.

There is also the central issue of capital formation. The orthodox view contained in standing codes was clearly inadequate to cover the vast number of new activities on whch plan funds were being spent, ranging from the construction of small buildings to big development projects. Here was a problem as much of conceptual definition as of maintaining accounts to keep track of the growth of capital. These and other questions arose out of development planning. Thus the complete divergence between the state plan and the classification of heads of expenditure including development heads in the budget, which had not changed greatly for long years, had struck me in the Planning Department as a problem deserving attention. The concept of performance budgeting had begun to assume importance as development outlays increased and the need to make the budget reflect achievement in terms of real assets was increasingly felt. This subject will be elaborated on later.

From my desk in the Planning Department I had made an enquiry of the Finance Department regarding their ideas about capital formation and the method they thought should be followed for computing it and watching progress in this direction. The exact nature of the enquiry it is difficult for me to recollect, but something on these lines was conveyed. On my taking charge of duties in the

Finance Department I was not a little amused to find my letter in one of the drawers of my new desk, which had up till then been occupied by a gentleman from the Accounts Department. It is conceivable that the letter was resting there for my predecessor to attend to it personally on his getting some free time, or the matter was not considered relevant at all.

Besides budget making and its coordination with the plan, I must mention another significant area with which a finance department deals. This is financial administration. There is hardly a government department at the mention of which people more readily agree that its existence is a source of much evil. If project implementation is tardy it must be the result of spokes put in by the mandarins of this department. If individuals do not get the pay scales or allowances that they think they deserve, the offending agency is there for everybody to know. This is to mention only a few examples of the general attitude. With all the despair that I feel over the ways of the bureaucrats and the soul-killing woodenness of the rule-ridden machine that they operate, I feel not the slightest hesitation in affirming that our suffering would be much greater in the absence of this department and its complementary organisation, the Audit Department. One has only to go through the "paras" that the comptroller and auditor general of India issues annually for each state as a part of his statutory responsibility. These two agencies have their share of the faults that are placed at the doors of their sister departments, like indulging in malpractices of various kinds, including dilatory tactics, but situated as we are and given the ever-increasing burden that governments are voluntarily placing on their shoulders, they perform one essential function: the imposition of some financial discipline. The need to do so should be obvious. It stems

from the fact that a government has to be and remain solvent. The estimates of expenditure and revenue given in the budget have to be enforced. Men are prone to spend and ignore the responsibility, if it is attached to them, for realising the promised revenue. There was the unforgettable admission of an officer running a public sector undertaking that he saw throughout the year only one side of the budget pages pertaining to his factory and earmarking funds for him to spend. The other pages, containing his own estimates of income that he expected from his activity, he never even looked at. Inevitably his expenditures ran over at the end of the year, while the revenues showed a sizeable shortfall. The same argument would apply all over the budget.

There is another vital function for a finance department. This is in regard to new expenditures. No government can do without entrusting this important task to a specialised body that objectively and by reference to rational standards analyses, for instance, the financial and economic viability of a new project, the recurring and initial costs involved, and the economic returns. In the general exuberance that followed in the wake of inauguration of economic planning in India, there was a virtual competition among states in producing fat plans by inducting new projects that in so many cases were mere notions. The cost of such projects always turned out to be much greater than originally envisaged. In spite of timely warnings and personally delivered economic admonitions of experienced administrators, the projects were there in the plans and the budgets before technical and other details were known and examined. Politics always got the upper hand, and the eventual harm that this reluctance to observe minimum norms of financial and economic discipline has done to our economy is too patent to be mentioned. The race

between assets creation and the enormous addition to money incomes of people generated in no small measure by reckless increase in the number of government employees of all kinds was soon lost by the former and more and more money began to chase goods, the number of which increased far less proportionately or not at all.

These are some of the more important areas of a finance department's responsibilities. I would not care to mention the irritating nature of all sorts of matters being referred to the Finance Department or the question of post-budget consultation with them. There would be ample justification for reducing these consultations to a minimum, but it would be necessary to have the Finance Department in the picture in cases of far-reaching sales and purchases of goods and services, the size of the transaction that would render such consultation necessary depending on various factors, like the total value of governmental operations and the adequacy or otherwise of executive agencies to take financially appropriate decisions.

I spent some months in getting oriented and then prepared a programme of improvements that I considered imperative. Events outside my control, however, overtook me before I could start work on them. The chief minister's differences with some of his colleagues, the major ones including the education minister, the finance minister, and the deputy minister, which had originated over a year ago, now acquired alarming proporations, and in early 1957 there was a rupture. Mr. G. M. Sadiq, a stalwart of long standing, suave and dignified, with an unblemished political career, the hallmark of which was his faith in socialism and progress, broke away with a team of three or four from the state government to form a rival political party,

which they christened the Democratic National Conference.

Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad placed finance and planning in his own charge. As finance minister, when asked, in accordance with practice, to indicate the nature of the cases that he would like to be referred to him, he said, "Rules should be observed, in the disposal of cases." I could not wish for a better dispensation. Technical work apart, mention of which, though brief, has been made above, there is a profusion of personnel references and proposals involving financial transactions of various magnitudes that are received in the Finance Department. Strange as it may seem, this type of work, though to me partly uninteresting in the extreme, gives to a finance department a privileged position in the eyes of people and is to the functionaries working in it a source of satisfaction. The difficult part of a finance officer's work relates to a situation where he has to be guided by his discretion in addition to rules and precedents. Difficulty also arises when he becomes subject to pressures, because these may prevent him from making decisions entirely in the interest of public business. These pressures from politicians of all types and others are quite common. Where rules were clearly applicable and we were free to act, in the sense that much of the business could now be disposed of at the level of officers, much satisfying work was done. Pressures either diminished or could be resisted easily in the new atmosphere.

All this, of course, implies that there was a modicum of probity at important points in the Finance Department. When I am asked to name the best finance minister I have worked with from among the several I served under, I do, indeed, expose myself to being called naive by naming Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. There is no exaggeration,

however, in this estimation, because as finance minister he almost never directed me to take a particular line or disagreed with me on the file in respect of important cases that were submitted to him. He did so once and boldly ordered a course of action quite contrary to the one suggested. Completely ignorant as I was of his dealings with executive departments, I failed to identify with some assurance the sources in the governmental apparatus and the methods employed that could be held responsible for his alleged questionable activities, if any existed. It is also possible to argue that in these early years of his stewardship things were not bad, at least, relative to later years.

In important areas of the financial system we were able, during this period, to effect some substantial improvements. The auditor general's jurisdiction had been extended to the state, but there were some financial transactions of the government, like those relating to the Transport Department, that had not yet become a part of the budget and expenditures, and receipts on their account were not included in the state's civil accounts. As a result they were not subject to audit by the auditor general, who was insistent that this exclusion was not consistent with the state's constitution, as indeed it was not. In spite of the ambivalent advice of the legal advisor, a luminary on deputation to the state, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad concurred with advice given to him by some senior officers, including me.

My attention was in good measure given to the coordination of the state plan with the budget. The plan estimates for each year were integrated with the budgetary provisions so that major account heads came to provide for plan and nonplan expenditures separately and the breakdown of these provisions between revenue and capital was distinctly given. As the size of the budget grew in

volume with the introduction of the plan and provisions were dispersed over a wide area under different account heads, it was thought necessary that to make plan implementation easy a separate document showing budgetary provisions for plan projects and schemes under revenue and capital and relating them to relevant heads in the budget should be prepared. The different sources of finance for plan projects also rendered this necessary. This was done and each year's budget came to have a second and complementary document called the plan budget. This was, up to October 1964, when I left the Finance Department, only being done in this state and Uttar Pradesh. The latter received honourable mention at meetings in Delhi and in the centre's advice recommending this practice to other states. Though our document existed in the concerned central government offices, it did not earn this honour. This effort must have appeared incredible or the size of the document was not big enough and it was too simple in form.

Plan budget coordination did not rest here. It was not enough that plan estimates were given their place in the scheme of things represented by the budget. Sums provided for new activity must be available to agencies in charge of projects as early as possible in the new financial year. This postulated clearance by the Finance Department in all cases, by the government in many. Within departments also there would be the question of communication of budget figures to officers in charge of execution of projects and of their powers whereby they would be able to start off.

It was always my feeling in those days that there was not adequate appreciation at the centre of how time-consuming and complicated in many ways the entire planning process in a federal setup is. I am not referring to the maze

created by the categorisation of schemes as state, central, and state-central and the financing and acounting procedures connected with them. This was stated recently to have been simplified, but much remains, I am told, to justify the statement that there are built-in knots in the system that are bound to cause delay in execution. I have in mind the simpler fact of the time needed to prepare an annual state plan, with the help of, rather than based on the reports of, executive departments. The annual plan embodies plan projects in hand, estimated outlay by the end of the year, the demand for the next year for them, and plan projects to be started for the first time. Understandably, the executive agencies keep in view the five-year-plan provision and demand as much as they think they can spend in the coming year. With all the advice they receive regarding the need to keep in mind the capabilities of the department, availability of materials, and their past achievements, the five-year-plan provision, which departments consider as good as a financial allocation to them, does not allow them, in a manner of speaking, to demand funds realistically. The ministries compete locally as much with each other, as the states do in Delhi, for as much as they can possibly get, always quoting the five-year allocation as a frame of reference, from the limited kitty with the state or the centre. After this wrangle such as it was for the nine years of my official career when I had charge of both the Finance and Planning departments, the formal agreement of the centre (Planning Commission) to a large number of schemes is avidly awaited. When it arrives, the figures are conveyed to departments, which are now asked to prepare fresh details for sanction. Plan-mindedness in these agencies is not sufficiently developed to enable them not to get confused and to be

prepared for a change in allocations. By this time, however, the plan allocation has receded into the background and its significance eroded. The details now have to be revamped by departments within a smaller amount. When these are prepared, finance and government approval must be available for them so that departments are able to operate on these budgetary provisions from April. This was very difficult. Delay was inevitable under the circumstances. Since the budget proposals must go to the legislature in good time before April, several provisions in them carried the condition that operation on them was subject to government sanction. This was also necessary because the union Finance Ministry's approval of financial assistance under various heads was received towards the end of January or even later. The performance of this state was, just the same, better than that of many as a roving team sent by the centre to find out the time when plan implementation in states actually started during a new financial year told us. Several projects did take off in April. Several factors helped in this: the interest of the state cabinet and the concerted effort of the two departments in my charge.

This is but a broad outline of some facts of the much larger issue of plan formulation and implementation in a federal setup. Whatever the rationalization that may have been effected in these, there can be no doubt that there is need for the realisation that while plan formulation at the central level receives much attention and is said to have reached a high stage of sophistication, a greater need is to reduce as much as possible the dependence of the states on the centre in respect of plan formulation and preparation of annual plans and their integration in the annual budget.

I began the practice of reviewing quarterly the state's resource position so as to indicate trends under important revenue and expenditure heads. This effort was commended as useful and novel. In respect of some revenue heads, like "Forest," I tried to warn the government as to the likely consequences of certain features of the behaviour of receipts under this head. I held very strong opinions in this matter, which sometimes led to unpleasant situations. Equally important was the sense of concern that I felt regarding the financial standing of all our industrial establishments, sometimes even our electric undertakings, taking the system as a whole. It was impossible for me to bring home to the ministry concerned the fact that almost all our undertakings were running at a loss and if the concerns were running with the full complement of labour it was possible only because the state's general revenues were paying for the loss. In some years, the subsidy was well over a crore of rupees per year. The position was in financial and economic terms highly indefensible and called for a complete probe into not only the management aspects of the concerns, but also their economics, that is, their viability given the economic conditions under which they were operating. About management some action was taken.

I have dwelt at some length on the constructive activities of the Finance Department devoted to reform and innovative practices. A good beginning in this respect was made during the period 1956–60, but my interest continued in this direction throughout my stay in this department.

My early years in the Finance Department were peaceful. Apart from a sense of general unease and occasional confrontations, both arising out of the lack of adequate rapport between me and my old friend mentioned earlier,

there was no tension. I was able to raise a complement of men in the two departments who were reasonably efficient and gave me their best. Interests of the capable were suitably advanced. In the Planning Department I was able to get several posts sanctioned to which young men with adequate qualifications were appointed. A statistical bureau was organised, and men were trained in Delhi and Calcutta. The bureau grew in size and functioned with a network of statistical cells in most government departments, and efficiently manned and managed, it began to issue useful statistical digests.

Improvements in the number and quality of personnel in these three important organisations of government (the departments of Finance and Planning, and the Statistical Bureau) were in a large measure due to the support I received from the chief minister and the deputy minister (before 1957). It was no small satisfaction to us when one programme advisor from the Central Planning Commission on his annual visit to the state, on being asked by the chief minister about the Planning Department and its work, remarked that it was the best he had seen. This happened in my presence. Later the deputy minister also spoke to me on the subject and almost in the same strain. Egotistical as all this may seem, I consider my work related to setting up, enlargement, and development of organisations as highly successful.

It was during this relatively quiet period in the Finance Department that almost an act of destiny took me to the chief minister one day. I submitted to him as Finance Minister a communication that brought to our notice irregularities of a certain type committed, it said, by my former deputy minister. The irregularities were certainly not grave, because such actions were not unusual, as is well known, ministers and other officials borrowing funds or

taking things on credit from government undertakings. And nobody could contest the opinion that the deputy minister was thoroughly unblemished in his ways. I committed, however, very unwittingly, one indiscretion, if it is true, as I came to know later, in that I raised the matter in the presence of a senior officer who had the reputation of belonging to both of the two camps, that of the government and of the Democratic National Conference, whose leaders were erstwhile members of the government. The sin had been committed, and nobody worried about what action I had suggested. I cannot record this (my opinion) except to say that it was not at all deprecatory in character in respect to the deputy minister. Furthermore, no grace marks were given to me for the fact that the chief minister had learnt about the matter directly also, so that if I had not committed the indiscretion of putting up the matter in the presence of a sneak—there must have been a discussion also—nobody ordinarily would have known what I had done. It was also not appreciated that no matter what my debt of gratitude was to my former deputy minister—it was, doubtless, substantial—I could not hold back the communication. My action, however, hurt the deputy minister and, it appears, deeply. I have no quarrel with this, because it was human. The seed of distrust and dislike that this incident produced was in due course, as a result of a further misunderstanding, to grow into positive hostility and animus. More of this later.

Early in 1960 the murky political atmosphere cleared a little and the dissidents returned. I got back my previous finance minister, and the chief minister parted with Planning in favour of the former deputy minister, who now became a minister. There were some other changes, but the main rebels were back in their old or better positions. Mr. Sadiq, who was the most prestigious member of the

group, was back in Education. Mr. Qasim, the youngest and an up-and-coming leader, became the revenue minister. This group, with the former deputy minister now planning minister, as their intellectual kingpin, had a reputation for being more forward-looking than the rest of our leadership. Their brief absence from government placed this reputation in sharp focus, and it suffered no change after their return to government except for the general cynical feeling that there is only one motivating passion, which all politicans have, namely, lust for power. There was no union of hearts, and before long the old trouble recurred. Infighting grew in intensity until the central figure in the drama—Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad—beat a retreat in 1963 under the Kamraj plan, thus bringing to an end one significant period in the state's postindependence history and closing, too, forever his own predominant role in the political life of the state.

I had not the slightest idea what the planning minister was carrying in his heart against me. The utter insensitivity with which he used his caustic tongue against me sometimes, particularly at meetings when my subordinate officers were present, baffled me. The gibes that the planning minister occasionally cast were not without an element of subtlety. Thus he would bemoan quite openly the inordinate length of time during which I had been finance secretary and refer to my two faces, one for planning and the other for finance. Sometimes his remarks on files betrayed his state of mind. Then he seems to have suggested to the chief minister that I should be relieved of the charge of the Finance Department. He was asked to make a written reference for this. That he was asked to do so on the telephone in my presence was a bizarre development, indeed. No such request was made, but I realised that my former benefactor was up in arms against me, and since

I considered this change in him wholly unjustified, ignorant as I was of the cause responsible for this, I did nothing to mollify him. I could have gone and asked him what the matter was. I did so later, after I had left the state, but not at this time. My pride stood in the way. On his part, the minister would not let up. Fortunately, I had no such problem with others in the government from the governor down to a deputy minister. They either had friendly feelings for me or bore me no ill will, so that when the minister threw out a remark about me such as "the two departments are not really run by him, but by two officers, one in each," the words were faithfully conveyed to me by the most eminent of them and the question asked, "How come all this?" I did not protest but pleaded to be relieved of one of the two departments. I must confess it was not now my pride only that stopped me from walking over to the minister, but I was deeply hurt, on hearing this observation and much more that led to the same result. Apart from the fact that the remark was factually baseless (one of the officers named by him did not belong strictly to the Planning Department and did nothing in respect of planning work, and the other officer was doing his job competently in the Finance Department along with a number of other officers, but circumstances had made him a blue-eyed boy of the department, having myself played no small part in it, and forced him into the notice of people), it was a complete reversal of the minister's previous opinion, expressed in no uncertain terms and quite often, that I was the only hope of the world.

I continued to have my two faces. I had no reason to believe that working directly with the chief minister when he was also in charge of the Finance Department had earned me his special regard so that I could draw on this resource in my new predicament. I did not feel the need

for it either, even though I had an inner wish, for some time at least, not to lose the Finance Department. But it so happened that after I was told that somebody was pressing for the transfer of the Finance Department from my charge, which was not being conceded, I was gradually drawn into a sheltered situation where psychologically I felt safe. It was obvious that the two camps were now distinctly identifiable, and I was seen to be increasingly gaining the confidence of the chief minister, whatever that meant. I was regarded as being "his man." I had avoided becoming controversial in this manner in the earlier phase of this internal conflict, and now I felt distressed because it was repelling to my sense of public service and if I could talk of my sympathetic interest at all, I was intellectually more akin to the group of the "rebels." But circumstances were more powerful than my intentions or actions.

The elections of 1962 brought me no relief; in fact, my troubles were aggravated. The planning minister was now in charge of industries. The wags spread the word that I had a hand in the change. Nothing could be further from the truth, because pleased as I was over this change, for obvious reasons, it had been brought about by the concerned pressure of the former planning minister's colleagues, including one of his distinguished corebels, according to the chief minister. That the pressure may have been the result of the superb skill with which the planning minister used to bludgeon ministers at widely attended meetings, of course with the finance minister as a silent onlooker by his side, all done sportingly and in the public interest, is another matter.

In the post-1960 period I had to work with three different finance ministers. One of them who was in charge of finance before also was to be my minister much longer than the other two. They were all educated, two of them

being lawyers by profession, experienced and mature. They had besides a certain amount of decency, and on a personal level I was happy to be with them. In their attitudes and ways of work there was a noticeable difference. The Finance Department had by now acquired a good amount of prestige and effectiveness. Established rules and precedents and procedures left little to individual discretion, and the extent to which our views finally prevailed was considerable.

On the whole my rapport with my ministers was complete, and I shall particularly cherish memories of my brief spell with one of the three, an elderly lawyer who never disagreed with me and who even sometimes put aside his own personal inclination if it indicated a course of action contrary to what I suggested.

The going was not as smooth as all this may indicate. When the chief minister was directly concerned with the activities of the Finance Department as he was before 1960 I had cause to be happy, as I have stated before. There was no overt interference with our work, no significant evidence of attempts at sacrificing, in a gross manner, the public interest.

I became painfully aware now that things were taking a different turn. It was not easy to identify factors that were mainly responsible. The ruling party—the National Conference—was becoming a powerful element in the body politic. Some of its important personalities, without having direct administrative responsibility, were exercising far-reaching influence over men and matters in the administration. The chief minister, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, had climbed onto the crest of a high wave, but his step was now unsteady and slowly he lost the élan for which he was so famous. He began to show an extraordinary disregard for principles, and there was lowering of

standards all round. There is no doubt that the fratricidal conflict within the government, which did not take long to raise its ugly head after the two camps had apparently rejoined forces in 1960, became both the cause and effect of this sad state of affars. Each side, it was clear, wanted to score, at the cost of the other, not so much in the eyes of the people at large as in the eyes of those of the centre, where the battle was really fought. I noticed at one time that these confrontations had an exhausting effect on the chief minister and his morale was on the downgrade. He spoke of resigning. The faction of the "rebels" continued, albeit subtly, their game of denigrating him locally and at the centre but gave due attention to economic development, for which they had ample opportunity provided to them by the fact that one of them had the industries portfolio to administer.

Forests are a resource endowed on us by nature, and some of ours reportedly are, in the economic sense, among the best in the world. The practice coming down from decades past has been for the government to sell portions of them declared technically to be disposable. There are comprehensive rules on the subject, and set procedures exist for inviting and sanctioning tenders offered by the public. The Finance Department is vitally interested in making this resource yield maximum income to the government. The rules being clear, it was not necessary for all such cases to pass to the minister through me. This saved me much bother, not very brave on my part, though. I was, however, involved in forest cases of a different nature, a sizeable number dealing with claims of lessees for rebate totalling to a considerable sum. The trees sold to them had been found, it was alleged, to contain more rot than marketable timber, and it was impossible,

it was contended, for the lessees to honour their obligations to the government. Technical committees had exhaustively examined the claims and recommended mercy. My instinctive reaction was to advise flatly that the request be rejected, but we stalled the matter by assigning it to a subcommittee of officers from concerned ministries and, in this manner, nobody heard of it for over a year. Then came a day when the matter came to life again. I realised that rebate seekers had powerful brokers in both camps of government, none of whom, however, spoke to me on the subject itself. There were oblique references to the reality of "rot" and its influence on the stability of the trade. I was also casually told that a certain lessee closely connected with one of the camps was not receiving the same treatment from me as others. This was as baseless a complaint as it was absurd. I consoled myself with the thought that this was an offshoot of the infighting, which, indeed, it was.

During the year in which this matter remained in cold storage the public accounts committee of the legislative assembly, before whom other rot cases had come up, had appointed a committee of some of its members and technical advisors to go on the spot and examine this question.

It was becoming increasingly unpleasant for me, though not difficult, to work without fear of putting the noose round my neck. The common assumption of politicians wielding power is that that the public (civil) servant is not sufficiently motivated by a desire to help economic development and that he is too conscious of rules and procedures. This may sometimes be true, and strange though it may appear, there are politicians who can also fall in this category. Good results, in my experience, have always followed where a minister concedes to the public servant a certain amount of patriotism and an awareness

of social responsibilities, and vice versa, and reasonableness is allowed free play. It was, as I have stated earlier, an enriching experience to have worked with a person like the former deputy minister. He was now the industries minister. Exactly the opposite was my fate now. Nothing that the Finance Department said about new schemes originating in the Industries Ministry could be anything but sinister and obstructionist. To our chagrin, the mandarins of the central government compounded the problem. Their views when received in writing were equivocal in language, which permitted both the Industries Ministry and the Finance Department to consider themselves equally vindicated. Nor did the advice of these respectable personages given on the spot strengthen our hands.

It should be stated in passing that the idea that a free exchange of officers should take place between the centre and the state was strongly held by several well-meaning persons in my state and in Delhi. This may have had political undertones, but there was also the feeling that local officers were inferior to their counterparts elsewhere. For some jobs this may have been true, but with all the handicaps arising out of very low salary scales and unsatisfactory social and political conditions in the state, the proposition was highly untenable in regard to services in general. It was amusing to be confronted with this question at meetings in Delhi. The officers taking the meeting would ask, "Why do you not take some officers from here?" After some initial resistance, they began to arrive. There is no doubt that some of them did us much good, and it is my firm belief that if they had arrived earlier things would have been different in some respects and for some people. We did receive also some "counterfeit" specimens, and such people made for some time an impact, for traditionally the Kashmiris hold the "outsider" in much esteem.

We did not begrudge them the perquisites they received, but their word received much more weight than was justified. Even after civil services were organised and the state cadre of IAS (Indian Administrative Service) constituted, much narrowness of mind in respect of ancillary benefits and a few other privileges was patent in the attitude of the state government towards the local appointees to the new cadre, which was as unwise as it was unfair. They would not even agree to designate stenographers to secretaries to government and head of department as personal assistants. After all, they seemed to think aloud, they, the local officers, appointed to the new cadre, were the same men as before, and in this the two factions in the government seemed to be in agreement, though about the membership of the cadre the group that was not in government when it was constituted had reservations.

This seems a digression, but it is not really. Augmented as the administration was with the services of imported personnel, we were still not able to put through our views on some important industrial proposals, like, for example, production and utilisation of coal and establishment of a ceramics factory. There were several other matters in which the Finance Department offered advice entirely on financial and economic grounds, but no matter how straightforward a comment was, it earned me ungracious remarks from the industries minister on files and at meetings. As if a hidden hand was at work, a critical development took place that added fuel to the fire. A programme advisor was on a visit to my state from the centre, and while examining the progress of plan projects he came to the industries sector and conveyed to us the annoyance of the concerned authorities in Delhi over the increase that the state government had shown in the cost of a certain project. I was myself surprised, because it seemed to be a

second or third hike, and what is more, I said the Planning Department was not aware of the change. The officer representing the Industries Department said that we had been informed. I checked with my office, asking the two officers concerned to see whether we had received a letter on the subject. The matter pertained to a period five months earlier. I was advised that no such information had been received. I was asked by the chief minister from the cabinet room whether we had been informed by the Industries Ministry about this matter. I reported what I had been told by my officers. Such was the stated renewed tension between the two factions that the chief minister reportedly treated the industries minister very shabbily in the presence of his colleagues. All this not concerning why the cost of the project had risen, but why a letter had not been written, though later the status of the project, in view of its rising cost, was also considered. The industries minister eventually produced a copy of the letter sent to us, and so the blame for "purposeful misreporting," by implication, was laid by the minister at my door. I was dumbfounded by the turn events had taken. The whole thing was so puerile and the way the politicians hammer nuts to fight out their battles made me really sad, so that when the state governor to whom the story had been carried talked to me about it I could say practically nothing. In the meantime, I had seen the file containing the letter written by the industries ministry. It was not a formal reference exclusively on this subject with an explanation of reasons responsible for the cost increase. There was a mention, though, of the increase in the cost of the project in question in this letter, under which the annual plan of the ministry containing a number of projects was forwarded. My officers chose to take the view that for the purpose of the query made by me this letter could be

ignored, but they could have told me so. It is possible that the two of them may have forgotten about it altogether, as I had, but one of them insisted that this could not be considered "the letter." I told him nothing on this occasion and bore the full brunt of the anger of the minister, who himself must have suffered much anguish. The official concerned felt so strongly about his position in the matter that on a subsequent occasion when I was remonstrating with him on a certain matter and I brought in this stick to flog him with, he reacted very sharply. He fell into a fainting fit. We feared this might create a scene, for though "Gheroes" (violent protests by organised labour) were unknown at the time, the young man looked quite bad. We bolted the door from inside, and three of us took his shoes off and laid him on a couch for a rest. He came to after some time, chattering the words "we cannot take it to be the letter." That might be so, but I had burnt my bridges completely now and was to take, in due course, my share of the punishment.

Trivial though this event was in itself, it obviously reflected a serious state of tension developing underneath the surface of things. There was much over which I felt worried, and I confided in some my opinion that there was going to be a breakdown of some sort. There was perceptible deterioration in various fields of administration, which, as I have said above, had already begun to show ominous signs. Besides what one saw and thought to be wrong, there prevailed a feeling that there was a lack of direction. In marked contrast with my earlier experience, I had reason to be seriously perturbed over some matters that were very irregular. It may be that M. Sadiq and his colleagues, the industries minister in particular, were trying to apply a brake to a worsening situation, and this increased the tension between the two factions. It can

be a safe guess that this was so at least in some measure. For although the industries minister had a large score to settle with the chief minister (Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad), which he eventually did, his complex character had not lost the element of bigheartedness and a sense of the old loyalty. He came into my room one summer's day in 1963 to commission me to go to Bakhshi Sahib and tell him that his "barge was getting filled up to the danger point" and that he should beware and, further, he, the minister, would not, of course, desert him. I did his bidding, but the response was not encouraging. The Kamraj plan was soon formulated, and it was said openly that it was not meant to be applied to the chief minister of this state, but he himself chose to fall into this net. The truth will never be known, at least for quite some time. I was holidaying outside Srinagar when the All India Radio announced the chief minister's resignation. I was not surprised, but far from commenting, "I told you so," I brooded wistfully over a decade that had now ended. When after a couple of days or so I went to see the chief minister to offer my words of regret for his quitting the government he confirmed that he had taken the initiative in this regard and added, "All's well that ends well." Little did he realise at the moment that the end of the story was a long way off yet. Before this sombre meeting began, wide awake as he always was, he questioned me as to why I had taken two days to see him about this important event. An honest reply would have been that even the belated visit was halfhearted. I kept discreetly quiet.

After the departure of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad as chief minister from the scene in October 1963, the situation continued to be uneasy for me vis-à-vis the industries minister and it sometimes became quite difficult. Mr.

Sadiq, who was now the chief minister, after a brief interval gave me reason to feel reassured, but I was really reaching the limits of my patience and a strange feeling of disgust overtook me. I decided to stand down and got my earned leave checked. I left my office in the evening only after every paper on my desk was disposed of. Furthermore, in sheer desperation I chose the path of defiance. For every unmerited knock I returned a knock in respectful and well-reasoned words. That this happened sometimes in the presence of the new chief minister and a new boss in the secretariat (the chief secretary) and a number of other ministers and officials imparted a dramatic character to these events. This could not, obviously, last long. One afternoon towards the end of October 1964 I received an official telephone message saying that I was being relieved of charge of the Finance Department. We were at this moment making arrangements for the incumbent finance minister to lay down his charge on the following morning, when we expected his successor to be in office. We had been invited to be present the next morning at the oath-taking ceremony of the new minister, with whom I had worked for long years. Before I could spell out the significance of what had happened, my successor knocked at my door and relieved me. As an old friend, he graciously allowed me to function in the room as planning secretary. The order of my transfer was received by me at my residence in the evening.

I had spent over eight and a half years in the Finance Department and my transfer was overdue, but the time chosen and the indecent haste with which it was put into effect and particularly in anticipation of a new minister, who was expected within a few hours, struck me as particularly unbecoming of a government. I had some time ago expressed my unwillingness to accept an offer from the

Central Planning Commission, the main reason being that I had only a year and half to go before superannuation. Now I felt hurt and drafted a personal letter to the initiator of the offer in Delhi intimating that I was willing to come. At the oath-taking ceremony the next morning I showed the letter to the chief minister. Kind and gracious as always, he said I was being too touchy and that the separation of finance from my other charge was only temporary. I had, however, made up my mind.

This narration of my work and experiences in the Finance Department would not be complete without relating it to certain interesting aspects of personnel management, which is the hard core of administration. As stated earlier, my two departments, which had grown in size and responsibilities over the years, presented no special probelems of management. There was a feeling of solidarity among the staff, and I received loyalty and cooperation from them, to my satisfaction. The important factor responsible for this was that by precept and example I offered uniform treatment to all individuals based on an objective appreciation of their merits. Favouritism of any kind, which leads to the formation of coteries and groups, was anathema to me. But we were not functioning in a vacuum. The Civil Secretariat was one department for administrative purposes under the chief minister, and his civilian advisor was the head of the department. My difficulties stemming from this situation, in which, though my day-to-day work was wholly the concern of my ministers, they (the ministers) had little to do with me administratively, the same being true of the entire secretariat, were rather unfortunate. These administrative matters fell in the domain of my administrative superior, with whom, to put it mildly, for me a proper equation did not exist, as has been discussed above. This lack of rapport was, however,

seldom allowed to reflect itself in open confrontation. This was possible because I walked on a tightrope, a feat, indeed, that elicited uncharitable comments from many who thought that I was the only "friend" the gentleman had. I guess the fact that I was in the chief minister's corner also played a part. There is no doubt, nevertheless, that this state of apparent calm was purchased at high moral cost. Matters that were under our jurisdiction (that is, that of the Finance Department), like the running of a school, were, whenever there were important questions, like recruitment of trainees, unceremoniously taken away from us, and decisions made in all solemnity by us were set aside on the most whimsical grounds imaginable. In its essence this was a matter of moral timbre and how far one was prepared to go, even possibly losing one's chair. The power structure at the moment was such that any major confrontation would have resulted in something very unpleasant. I had a fatal weakness for the Finance Department, and, doubtless, so did my minister, because he did not so much as whimper when major blows on our prestige were delivered. One of the things in this process was the merciless way in which we were undercut in the department. Methodically and regularly in the name of "getting things done" our blue-eyed boy, already mentioned, would be called and papers finalised with his assistance. Loyal and good though this officer was, he could not help developing impish qualities and exploiting the situation, in the creation of which he had no hand, to his advantage. The limit was reached when a proposal was made by him to me (it appeared later at the suggestion of or at least in back-channel consultation with the chief secretary) about establishing a certain organisation in the state, with its administrative control vested in our department. During discussion, without rejecting his proposal, I offered an

opinion regarding its operational arrangements that, apparently, he did not relish. The undercutting had by now reached an advanced stage, so that when I returned from a tour after two or three days' absence from my office, I found the matter had been finalised. This was the height of irregularity, and in this way the integrity and soldarity of the department were seriously undermined. Feeling very bad, I asked my minister about it. He said pathetically, and, I must say, unabashedly, "What could I do? He placed the file before me, and I agreed." I talked to the chief minister in rather strong terms, as I used to sometimes. He seemed to be angry, but not quite, and offered to undo the whole thing. I requested him not to, because I did not want to overreact. I was sorry, indeed, about my colleague who had given me his best and for whom I had done more than for most. He was led astray and unnecessarily committed what was an act of sneaky disloyalty in regard to a matter that was at the stage of discussion between us and it was always possible to come to a decision. He got in this manner a temporary advantage, which he soon lost owing to circumstances with which I had nothing to do, though I had by this time moved in the matter of creating a second line of middle-line officers in the department.

Chapter VII

My Visit to the Former USSR and Some Other Countries

In April 1959 I was asked to accompany the governor, then called Sadar-i-Riyasat, and his wife, who were visiting the USSR as official guests of the government. I was, it appeared, almost a last-minute choice. The USSR government representatives who met us on arrival at the Moscow Airport were looking for another officer. I had freer access to the governor than was usual with ministry officers, since I had been some sort of a guide to him in his academic pursuits. This may have weighed with him finally in asking for me, though other reasons were also said to be responsible.

This tour, as I shall describe below, afforded me an unusual opportunity to add to my knowledge of people in other lands, their institutions and ways of living. Needless to say, there was ample fulfillment of my expectations not only in the former USSR visit, but also in the tour of some other countries in Europe: England, France, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and Belgium. I made the following final entry in my journal, that I kept for this tour: "Thus ends an eventful six-week period in my life—a period full of remarkable experience by way of knowledge

gained of systems of government, political and social institutions, and the attitudes and living conditions of the people. This knowledge was, however, gained at a good bit of physicial and mental cost."

The tour turned out to be strenuous for me. We were constantly travelling, and even during halts there was a considerable amount of running about to be done. By itself this would not have meant much if some kind of assistance were available to me to take care of travel arrangements, which were to be made at intervals of two or three days, entailing booking of places on airplanes, and collecting and moving of luggage, which grew in number after every halt. For me there was also the most important task of participating in discussions and sometimes preparing for them and recording of the day's events. There were also a number of other jobs that a private secretary or personal assistant is expected to attend to. The workload would have been heavy even for a younger man, assuming, of course, that the various tasks were equally efficiently done as I tried to do them. It was obvious that we were one too short, but it was primarily a question of funds.

The governor was a man of much charm and refinement, and he treated me with courtesy. He was not one of those present-day important men, who not infrequently refer to a past associate, with a condescension that is as ill-concealed as it is annoying, as "my old teacher." The governor refers to this fortuitious circumstance but rarely, and when he does there is a genuine quality about it. During the tour he placed me under debt by offering me gifts in cash and kind. All the same, on a few occasions I was upset by, among other things, the abrasive practices of protocol that were observed. I do not know whether protocol demanded that I should or should not have been

invited to the reception given by the Indian high commissioner in the governor's honour in London. I had met the high commissioner at her residence in the company of the governor and his wife when they called on her officially, and I considered the absence of an invitation improper and a gratuitous insult. There was another, though trifling, event, but quite impolite. For the theatrical performance of *My Fair Lady* three tickets were provided, one of which was meant for a guest. It was casually mentioned to me that it was not possible to get a fourth. Not to miss the chance of seeing the reputed play, I approached the gentleman at my hotel's stationery counter. He did not hesitate to oblige me by promising to get me a ticket, so he did. There was no surcharge whatsoever.

We were in what was the Soviet Union for twenty-three days and visited, based as we were in Moscow, a number of republics and important cities in them, including Leningrad, Stalingrad, and Samarkand. We spent two to three days at each place. The itinerary of the tour was such as enabled us to see a little of each major zone, as one might say, of this vast country with its variety of cultures and rich diversity of natural endowments. While Moscow, Leningrad, and Stalingrad in the north are culturally a part of Europe, Tashkent and Stalinabad (Dushanbe), far away in the extreme south, are central Asian cities, the latter being quite close to Afghanistan. The difference is strikingly manifest not only in the physiognomy of the people, but in their architecture, music, literature, and very style of life. Tiflis (Tbilisi), in Georgia, appeared to me to lie in between these two sharply contrasting cultures, bearing much evidence of the Oriental influence of the past. I was impressed with the pride the Georgians have in their cultural heritage, which is, among other things, reflected in their language and literature.

Of the old Russia there was much to see. The two cities of Moscow and Leningrad were very beautiful. Their fame is not only history's gift to them for various reasons, but is, in a measure, due to the fine architecture of some of their buildings and the sculptural magnificence of Leningrad. In this the influence of France is said to have been considerable. The art of old masters has been preserved with meticulous care both in Moscow and Leningrad. The Hermitage, the art museum in the latter city, is perhaps as priceless a place as the Louvre in Paris. There are works, among so many others, of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, and Picasso. There are Japanese, Chinese, and Indian sections also. The Moscow Gallery received only a fleeting visit from us, so hard pressed we were for time, but at the Hermitage we spent several hours, which even I, with my very poor ability at understanding painting, could feel was insufficient. The governor, with a keen eye for this art, was quite at home, and his occasional explanations were helpful. As at the Louvre several years before, I thought that some paintings had a unique quality of brightening up even humble minds. So at the Hermitage I found it difficult to take myself away from a painting that depicts the weeping mother with a child in her arms. The picture affected me profoundly.

Marxism and Leninism and houses of God seemed to be coexisting in Russia at this time. We drove to Zobrusk, a place about sixty miles from Moscow. There was a cluster of churches here in one of which the czars once came to pray. One or more of these had been converted into a seminary, something like a college of theology. It was a monastic institution, like several others in the country, devoted to giving instruction in theological dogma in an uninhibited manner. There were 200 monks on its rolls at this time, who were receiving instruction in a variety of

classical and modern languages besides the Scriptures. They had a course on the history of contemporary religions, but the students did not have much time to study other religions extensively. This was career training for them, and it was obvious that after what appeared to be a comprehensive education they left as professional priests. There was, therefore, reason to believe that unless one was determined, with a less than honest attitude of mind, to dismiss what we saw as stuff for the credulous, there were practising believers in what was once the USSR. Their number might be a very small proportion of the total population, though. On the basis of the offerings received at the church, the principal of the seminary, who, ironically enough, was a serious-minded medical graduate, stated that the number of believers might be increasing. There was no such condition as submission to a political ideology imposed on the trainees, nor was there a subvention from the government. Marxism was not taught, though the Soviet constituion was.

The Russian Orthodox Church was in the midst of Easter festivities. On the night of the Resurrection we found ourselves in a vast assembly of people in a church in Moscow. The number was too much for the hall to take, causing a good number to spill over onto the street outside. Men and women of all ages devoutly waiting for the coming hour were cautioned by the patriarch, a venerable white-bearded man of over eighty, to observe silence until the midnight hour struck. Right at that moment resonant voices of a choir rose from a gallery announcing that Chirst had risen. Thereafter the patriarch and the priests went round from ikon to ikon applying the cross to themselves and chanting. The congregation also chanted in response. The entire atmosphere was solemn and laden with

emotion. We were told that the function was to continue until morning. We left after an hour.

In Leningrad we visited the large and fine mosque where twenty to thirty thousand devout Muslims came to offer prayers every Friday. The chief priest was an impressive person in his robe and turban. He was well versed, it was stated, in the Holy Quran, spoke Arabic, and had visited the holy places.

Belief in religious dogma and practising it were not forbidden in the former USSR. There were facilities, in fact, that enabled people to worship, but it would be difficult to characterise this as signifiying religious freedom. The blow dealt by Marxism to religion here philosophically has been almost fatal. The average Russian did not seem to think of God and religion as people elsewhere did, as a constant point of reference. He did not seem to have a place in their minds. A young Muslim in faraway Samarkand spoke derisively of those "other-worldly institutions and systems." "Go to Bokhara," he said, "if you want to know what it was like in the past." Since we did not visit Bokhara there was no way of noting the difference, if that was possible, between the old and the new order in respect to religion. European Russians born after the revolution with whom I have had some contact during the tour and since confirm the impression that the concept of God and religion is alien to them. One wonders how much this is the result of radical changes in the system of education and how much political disadvantage may accrue to people openly theistic. Every inhabitant of the former USSR was not a member of the Communist party, but nonmembers, such was my impression, did not manage to occupy high places in the government. Believers—devout Christians, for instance—may have been subject to the same handicap.

Russia at the time was a one-party state. There was a supreme parliament for the union, and each republic had a parliament of its own. It is true that for election to these bodies there were no noncommunists contesting members of the Communist party. No noncommunists, obviously, could be members of the central Committee of the USSR Communist party or of the Politburo, where state power lay. For this reason and due to the absence of any openly dissident press and the right of free assembly, the capitalist world describing itself as "the free world" denies to the socialist countries—theoretically called communist states—the right to similarly characterise themselves. The latter paid them back in the same coin. Nationalism, democracy, and freedom can be obtained in them only, they claimed. No value judgement need be passed on this controversial subject. It all depends on which side of the fence one stands in terms of one's socioeconomic and political beliefs. The two social orders, if we put aside this question of "freedom," are essentially two contrasting systems of production. Since our stay in the former USSR was of very short duration, it would be bold to try to write comprehensively about the system and accompanying social and cultural features of the new order. It was, however, on this subject and a few other matters that I tried to satisfy my curiosity.

In simple words, the class relations with which we are familiar in our country did not exist in the former USSR. There were no owners there of land, factory buildings, machinery, goods, and materials, on the one hand, or sellers of labour, on the other. Ownership was public or social, and everyone was a worker. Consequently, the system of distribution of national income and exchange had been devised to suit this order of relationship. Since there was no free market, the kind and quantity of goods

to be produced over a given period of time were planned by a central authority, with the assistance of plans drawn up by collective farms, factory establishments, and other organisations and coordinated at the regional and national levels. All trade was done by the state. Sale and purchase of goods took place at state shops. Every worker, high and low, received a money wage and went shopping much as we do in this country. There would, however, be one difference in the eyes of a free market shopper. The Soviet worker might, over a period of time, find that there was consistently a shortage of things he wanted. Some might not be there at all. This was perhaps an essential feature of the system. It preferred to produce things that were considered socially necessary and not only those that catered to an individual's particular requirements. We visited shops in various cities and made purchases. The shops, never bursting with plentiful supplies, as we were accustomed to, were reasonably well stocked, particularly with goods of everyday requirement. The glamour and variety of people's dress that strike one so forcefully in an American or European city were absent, though there was no drab uniformity and people were adequately clothed. In Leningrad the level of sartorial appearance of men and women seemed to be higher than elsewhere.

How much equality, in an economic sense, did I find in the former USSR? "Unto each according to his need" was not a determinant of individual incomes and, therefore, of consumption. There were wage differences among factory workers, for example. At Krasne Proletari, a machine tool manufacturing factory in Moscow, there were five thousand workers engaged in a complex and sophisticated system of production. Wages, the director (chief engineer) explained, were determined by productivity of the

workers and the actual amount earned by a worker depended on the amount of work done by him. The director emphasised that despite the highly specialised nature of certain tasks, work done was measured and paid for on an equal basis. The average wages of a worker came to 1,000 rubles a month. The foremen, whose wages were fixed, received 1,400 rubles and the director 3,000. Bonuses were paid also. At the iron and steel works at Rustaveli (Georgia), which employed nine thousand workers, the wage averaged 1,200 rubles. In Tashkent we visited a large textile factory employing seventeen thousand workers. The wage rate ranged from 700 to 900 rubles a month, that of a foreman being 1,200 rubles. Higher-up workers drew up to 2,000 rubles. We also saw the Stalingrad Tractor Factory. There were fifteen thousand workers in the factory, with a wage rate of 970 rubles for the workers, 1,250 for the senior foreman, and 3,000 for the director.

With minor differences, the wage rate and other conditions of work were based on discussion and agreement with representatives of workers, who were invariably organised in a trade union, with a single union for all trades within an establishment. When disputes arose, there were standing arrangements for the adjudication. Decisions were subject to appeal in a court of law.

A certain degree of reliance can be placed in the statistics mentioned above, provided as they were by responsible men. One can draw conclusions in regard to wage rates and differences in various levels of wages in an establishment and compare them with our conditions in India. The inference one might draw must be related carefully to the many facilities that were available to workers in what was USSR. Housing should come first. At the Tashkent factory there was an arrangement whereby in the

allocation of living space the main consideratiion, whatever the status of the worker, was his need. If the family size was larger than a fixed norm, he would get more accommodation. Apart from this, with the new emphasis we found placed on new housing construction and the consequent brisk activity in this regard, the facilities for workers we felt were bound to improve appreciably. Judging from the nominal rent charged (at Tashkent it was 3 to 4 percent of wages earned) this measure of social amenity raises, in a sense, the wage level of the worker and makes for less inequality. (Our Chawls in slums in this respect demonstrate the value of this amenity poignantly.) Other social services of a similar nature that resulted in lessening of income inequality were medical assistance and recreational and holiday facilities. I had read about the high quality and pervasiveness of medical services in the former USSR, particularly in the maternity welfare and gynaecological services. We did not visit any of the latter centres or more than one hospital. Through enquiries I learnt that medical care of all kinds was one of the important features of the social setup. An impressive example was the care of the aged father-in-law of one of the Soviet officers attached to us during the tour. He was too old to move to the hospital of his area and was laid up with a kidney ailment. The doctors who visited him at his home thought his dentures needed immediate attention. The dentist and the technicians with all the necessary equipment were made available at the man's residence. This was nothing extraordinary, I was told. I have no reason to doubt the veracity of this statement. By contrast with our conditions, the value of this amenity is not to be measured only in terms of money, but one has to consider also the advantage of getting an essential service without much fuss. In our public hospitals, to put it mildly, there is much room

for improvement in the quality of service rendered, including intolerable congestion in both indoor and outdoor facilities, but the private sector, with all the money a patient may spend, is beset with ills of its own. Above all, how much of our population is covered by these facilities? In the former USSR, these were almost incredible. Everyone, it was claimed, had access to these facilities. This, doubtless, was a significant factor in the creation of a just social order.

We spent some time at the Paediatric Institute in Leningrad. It was a medical college where instruction was given in children's diseases and their treatment. There was a large children's hospital attached to it. The director and most of the staff were women. Being the only institute of its kind in the country, it had been conceived on a large scale. We moved through the various departments of the hospital and saw its magnificent equipment and the large number of competent and zealous women doctors. The population of the wards, all children of various ages ranging upwards from six or seven months (these children were under special care and treatment), presented an edifying spectacle.

Lenin considered children's welfare a matter of major national importance. One of the earliest decrees issued by him related to measures for controlling the high rate of infant mortality. The Paediatric Institute described above was one of the practical steps taken in this direction. Moral and mental development of children were considered equally necessary. A movement for establishing what were called Palaces of Pioneers was started in 1925. Children up to seventeen received training in the concepts and methods of social service. They learnt about the value of discipline and the virtue of working for others. They were also given instruction in subjects of special interest to

them. Elaborate arrangements existed for games, songs, and dance. There were also art classes. In Leningrad there were 100 such palaces, but we visited only one, the largest palace, housed in the former mansion of a czarist nobleman. As one entered, one was taken charge of by a Young Pioneer. As a token of the kinship that the visit was supposed to establish, a young girl tied a scarf round my neck. I became a Pioneer, too. For the duration of the visit this Pioneer was my friend, guide, and philosopher. As a supplement to normal schooling the palace functioned in the evening. The hours these young people spent at the palace could be of far-reaching significance to their moral and intellectual growth.

Among the national priorities, education occupied a place of eminence. Primary and high school education was compulsory and provided at public cost. There were vocational and technical institutes to receive young people who were not able to enter the universities. Admission to universities was gained through a national public examination. Advancement of learning in various fields and scientific research was taken care of by universities and academies of science. There were specialized institutes like the Institute of Philosophy and the Oriental Institute, both in Moscow, which we visited. The pattern was uniform so far as the institutional arrangements for postgraduate instruction for learning and research were concerned all over the country. In Moscow we visited, besides the institutes of higher learning mentioned above, its prestigious university, which had sixteen thousand full-time students and seven thousand enrolled in evening classes and five-hundred thousand books in the library. In Tiflis (Georgia), Stalinabad (Tadzhikistan), and Samarkand there were, besides schools and institutes, the two apex bodies of higher learning, a university and an academy of science. The

depth and range of studies and publications based therein were impressive.

The Oriental Institute in Moscow at the time I visited was 130 years old and exclusively engaged in research. We met the learned men. Its Indology department worked on our ancient sacred books, the Vedas, Mahabharta, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita. A second edition of their translations was being issued. Our Shaiva philosophy was also a subject of study here. Rabindranath Tagore held a fascination for the researchers. A book was under preparation in connection with the centenary celebrations of Guru Dev in 1969. The institute had divisions devoted to research and study on specific areas of the Oriental world.

At the Institute of Philosophy we had a different experience. We were in the presence of elderly scholars in various fields of the natural and biological sciences. They were obviously men with achievements in their subjects to their credit. The atmosphere of cordiality that prevailed encouraged me to dabble in matters in which my interest was profound but familiarity limited. We exchanged ideas about some of the more important problems of psychology like the attributes of the human mind and its potentialities. I talked about the opinions of Lysenko, and though the remarks made by me were somewhat embarrassing, they offered comments with a certain amount of candidness. They talked very instructively on the problems of advanced physics that were their special concern—including "the determinable versus indeterminable nature of the universe," a problem that the great physicist Einstein tried to solve until the end of his life. A six-volume study on the history of philosophy was under preparation. Two volumes had been published. The history began with the philosophy of the East.

For our visit to the University of Moscow the director, a mathematician who knew English but chose to speak in Russian, had thoughtfully collected a group of English-speaking students. I talked for quite some time with a woman doing advanced work in economics. She was preparing a dissertation on the economics of capitalism. This had naturally obliged her to make an extensive study of Western economists. To this extent the common belief that the Soviet system was a closed one, inasmuch as Western thought was not allowed to exercise influence on the minds of people, would appear to be untenable. But when the young lady said that she wanted to prove how wrong the economists of the West were, I thought, without, of course, telling her so, that she was bringing a closed mind to bear upon her subject, thereby depriving her work of scientific value.

In Tiflis (Georgia) at the Academy of Sciences and the university I felt almost overwhelmed by the sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that the professors and scholars exhibited. The academy had been established in 1940. The grey-bearded professors we met were quite old. One of them was a specialist in Georgian language and literature. As in Moscow, the primary concern of the academy was research, though postgraduate teaching was also done on a limited scale. There were about fifteen hundred research workers, all civil servants, with a large supporting establishment. The academy functioned through a number of specialised institutions. At the university we met, as elsewhere, the professors of several subjects, first in a group, then with the professors of Georgian literature, Sanskrit, and economics we had separate talks. They were venerable old men dedicated to their subjects. There were six thousand students at the university, most of them living on the campus. Most of the students, subject to an

income ceiling for their parents, received stipends. The students had to spend over five years at the university, to obtain a doctorate.

The professor of economics, a Georgian, spoke in English. A Marxian economist, he had studied in Berlin. He taught Western economists also, with a critical appreciation of the subject matter. He considered Keynes the best of Western economists, although "he also does not go far." "There is no doubt," the professor asserted "that the socialist method of production is superior." The conviction with which this assertion was made left no room for a debate. There was, however, some discussion about India's concern over her increasing population and its effect on economic development. He agreed that in the short run there might be a problem like this, but he was hopeful that as India advanced economically she would cease having to worry about it.

Much work has been accomplished at these two centres of learning, the university and the academy at Tiflis. We were presented with a number of their major publications, the largest a veritable tome, being a work of the professor of Georgian literature. The lady professor of English whose earnestness as a scholar was so patent gave us her books, translations of Georgian works into English.

As I have mentioned before, I felt particularly happy at the academy and the university. This was partly because the scholars exuded something more than scholarship. They seemed to be thriving on the knowledge that a cultural renaissance had taken place in Georgia, which was made possible by the revolution. Georgia has had the bad luck of having been invaded in the past from time to time and occupied by aliens. When at the turn of the nineteenth century the czars took over Georgia it was not a change

wholly for the better. The national culture of the Georgians, I was told, remained suppressed as before, so that there were "only two Georgian secondary schools in 1917, though there were many Russian schools." After the revolution they came into their own and it seemed as though the revolution provided the stimulus that was required to attack effectively the centuries-old suppression of Georgians. Evidence of this was available in the work that was being done by men and women of letters, all Georgians, on their old language and literature. As a result of new opportunities created by the revolution for all-round growth, Georgian physicists and mathematicians and other scientists had earned international recognition in other parts of the country, the forces making for development of local resources of all kinds, giving a fillip to Georgian music, dance, and drama, of which we witnessed an interesting specimen.

Travelling farther south, we spent some time in Tashkent and Samarkand (Uzbekistan) and at Stalinabad (Tadzhikistan). It was a different world in landscape and people, but the same fervour for development, economic and cultural, prevailed. In Tashkent I had the special benefit of the company of a learned scholar, Professor Aminov, who was teaching economics at Tashkent University and was connected with economic planning of the republic. I spent many hours with him, and as I had already acquired some knowledge about the southern republics of the former USSR from an economic study made by Prof. G. Myrdal based on his travels in this country, I came to derive much profit from discussions with Professor Aminov. Uzbekistan's population in 1959 was stated to be less than 10 million, the rate of yearly growth being over 3 percent. Primarily agricultural before the revolution, it had embarked on a programme of development that was based

on intensification of agricultural practices, which included rapid mechanization. Along with this, endowed as the republic was with natural resources like coal, an adequate water supply, natural gas, and good soil for cotton cultivation and requisite facilities for silk production, a comprehensive plan for industrialisation was undertaken. Iron and other raw materials were imported from adjacent republics. A substantial part of the capital requirement was raised within the republic. As Myrdal has also observed, public health and education received very adequate attention. The results were narrated by Professor Aminov. Per capita income had increased substantially over the years after the revolution, the shift of the population from agricultural occupations to industry during this period being mainly responsible for this. Forty percent of the population was engaged in industry in 1958. The professor believed that industrialisation was a necessary precondition for improving the economic conditions of underdeveloped areas. I have already made mention of the large Tashkent textile factory. Silk manufacture was another major enterprise, for which the market extended beyond the former USSR, as silk goods were exported to the United Kingdom and France. There were also engineering concerns and chemical factories. Uzbekistan was economically better off than other central Asian republics like Kazakhstan, the Turkmen Republic, and Khargiz, but within Uzbekistan itself there were backward areas, those lying near the mountains.

The Tashkent Academy of Sciences, like its sister institutions that we had seen, was a centre of high-level intellectual activity. Its Oriental studies department had a unique collection of old and rare manuscripts like the original works of Ghani, the poet-saint of Kashmir, Al-Beruni, and Abū Bin-Sen. They made a regular hunt for such

manuscripts. The chancellor of the Tashkent University was a chemist who had recently returned from an invitational tour of American universities. Apart from the professor of archaeology, who was quite elderly, most of the other professors and their assistants were young men. Another distinguishing feature of the university was its special interest in Oriental studies. Urdu and Hindi were taught, for which textbooks had been written. We received gifts of a number of them. A young man from the Punjab, Mr. Madan Mohan, having made his way to Tashkent some eighteen years ago, had settled there and never looked back. He was in charge of the department.

Finally, a word about a ballet, *Dila Ram*, by Alisher Navat, must be said. It was an Oriental story skillfully enacted on the stage at the Tashkent Theatre by Uzbeks, to the delight as much of foreign visitors as of a large gathering of the dancers' compatriots, who we understood did not pay much to gain admittance.

Tadzhikistan lay in the extreme south of the former USSR and was nearest to Kashmir. It seemed to be just across the mountains girdling Kashmir. Before visiting the capital of this republic, Stalinabad (now named Dushanbe), we flew into Samarkand, the famous central Asian city. Men and women in search of the arable land and water necessary to settle down, like ancient Aryans and invaders like Alexander and Timur and his successors with their large armies, one liked to imagine, had traversed these dust-laden roads, which with the surrounding stretches of open land seemed not to have changed much. This was a city of mausoleums and other memorial-like buildings built in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Timur's mausoleum and the courtyard with a large marble seat set in an alcove from where Timur addressed his

courtiers and others looked beautiful and fresh. The building of the Madrasah (a school of theology) built by Timur stood to this day, though precariously, as a monument to his solicitude for his people and to the building skill of the time. A number of buildings were added later, sometime in the seventeenth century. The rectangular courtyard increased the grandeur of the complex of buildings, which have received appreciation from distinguished visitors over the years.

Samarkand had a population of 1.60 lakhs.* It had a city council. The chairman of the council, an impressive man, introduced us to the postrevolution Samarkand with a statistical narration of the achievements under the new political setup. There was a university in this not very large city. There were also a number of technical institutions and vocational schools. Agriculture, horticulture, and sheep breeding had received special attention in planning the educational system of the area. This conformed to the practice that we found in vogue in other republics, too, namely, to relate instructions and training to economic requirements. A bracing climate with large pastures and good arable land would obviously lead to the setting up of appropriate training and research institutes, among which a sheep-breeding research centre was stated to be one of the best in the country. There was no drinking water supply "in the old days," nor a sewage disposal system, two good reasons for the prevalence of malaria, which had become endemic. After the revolution, eradication of malaria became a policy goal. Drinking water was provided and a sewage disposal system built in 1943. So also was a malaria institute. As a result, it was stated, there was no malaria now. The chairman referred with

*One lakh = 100,000

particular emphasis to their medical institute and the sizeable tuberculosis sanatorium, which were staffed with suitable personnel who were Tadzhiks. They were as good as any in the country, a fact that made possible their occasional exchange for brief periods with persons from other parts of the country. From the beginning, development programmes gave pride of place to education and training of local people. In this task outside assistance was obtained. It was the result of this policy, according to the chairman, that adequate manpower was available for their various institutions and projects. As stated before, Professor Myrdal in his report did subscribe to the view that social services had received adequate resources in these southern regions. (How many cities with a population of two hundred thousand have a sewage disposal system in our country? We do not have one in Srinagar, with a population of more than double that number.) Apart from this testimony, it was not possible to do more in order to accept the description given. People of Samarkand did not strike me as much better off than our own people in some remote parts of the Kashmir valley.

Stalinabad was known as Dushanbe before 1929, a name it took from the pleasant and not very big river that flowed by its side. Reportedly the old name is back in use now. Stalinabad's backwardness must have been particularly galling to the new leadership, so that there was hardly any vestige left now in the city of the old town. It had been completely rebuilt. Even in 1959 the factories, commercial establishments, and government offices seemed to be new. So also did roads and residential flats and homes. The population of the city was about a quarter-million. The Academy of Sciences, established in the early fifties, and the university, in 1949, bore a modern look, their various departments and the general organisation

being almost on par with similar institutions in the north. There was, however, special interest visible in local and Oriental subjects. The university had also recently laid down that students wanting to enroll in some scientific disciplines should after secondary school receive practical training for two years in specified trades. (It is reported this regulation has been abolished.) With five years required for graduation (bachlor's degree) and three more years for a master's degree it would seem that a young person would be about twenty-eight when he finished his postgraduate studies in some subject. This insistence on practical training, I found, obtained in one of the northern universities also. Though the rationale of it was not quite clear to me at the moment, the idea perhaps was to make instruction itself easy and meaningful, and in some fields the end product of the university should not be a total greenhorn.

The Firdousi Library in Stalinabad was, like its sister institutes elsewhere in the country, a storehouse of books and rare manuscripts, the latter mostly on subjects relating to the Oriental world. The economic plan for the republic was on the Uzbekistan pattern, embodying a combination of consumer goods industries with machinery manufacture and, of course, adequate emphasis on agriculture and horticulture. In terms of natural resources, these republics were endowed with coal, natural gas, and land suitable for cotton cultivation and mulberry culture. Industrialisation and agricultural development and improvement in medical and public health were basic features of their economic programme.

A visit to a kolkhoz near Stalinabad named after Lenin—the only collective farm we visited—and a visit to the Supreme Soviet of Tadzhikistan were highlights, both instructive and interesting, of my sojourn in the republic.

The kolkhoz was as big as one could imagine, a farm of twenty-five hundred hectares. There were about three thousand workers living with their families on this farm. The management was wholly Tadzhik, the director being a university graduate. The director and his colleagues in the management were earnest men dedicated to the tasks that running of a farm of this size demanded. A number of hours were spent by them in explaining the organisational pattern of the farm, its division into brigades, with a leader in charge of each, the way the production plans were drawn up, the distribution of the gross output among the cultivators, the government, and the development and other funds, and a whole host of other matters. I will not claim complete enlightenment in regard to the economics of the enterprise, but the apparent success of the farm, with its neat fields and contented peasantry, was not without its effect on me. I say "apparent" because an orthodox view would be to concentrate on the net return on the investment after all costs, including interest and depreciation, had been provided for. That I did not discover, but what was obvious was the fact that the workers, or we may call them the cultivators, lived reasonably well. The residential cottages on the farm, into some of which I walked at random, were clean and comfortable, with some articles of furniture and other bric-a-brac that one may find in a house of a family of modest means. Each household had a small vegetable garden attached to it. This was held in ownership. The farm was almost a self-contained organisation. There was a good secondary school, also a Palace of Culture. I spent some time at both these places and found them similar to several such institutions that we had visited earlier.

The wages were fixed by the government, but there were a number of additional facilities provided. There was

little doubt, it may be repeated, that the workers, taking together wages and all the amenities they enjoyed and above all the atmosphere of equality in which they worked and lived, had every reason to be happy. My mind goes back as I write this to the virtual semiserfdom in which I found some Harijan workers living in the Varanasi District of Uttar Pradesh while touring a development block in 1966. I visited a family who were eking out a precarious living. They lived in a hovel in a compound of negligible size outside the main village. The children were swarming about while others were winnowing some grain that was said to be paddy but looked like the dispensable residue of poor-quality paddy. This was part of the wages they received for their labour on other people's land.

I have a smattering of Persian. The Tadzhik language sounded akin to it, so that I found it possible to follow Tadzhik and converse in it. This facility was particularly helpful when I attended cultural performances at Samarkand and Stalinabad. The concert of dance and music staged at the Samarkand Theatre was an unforgettable experience. The music was soft and sweet, and there was much resemblance to the classical Kashmiri music with its undertones of mysticism. I could largely understand and enjoy Tadzhik songs. The concert started with an introduction by some major functionary—he may have been the impresario—in words that were warm and eloquent. He referred to the guest of the evening from India and spoke of the affection and respect in which India was held in the former USSR. I was much impressed with the manner in which he spoke and the gestures that accompanied his forceful and interesting speech. Similarly, the audience, its composition, and the rapt attention with which they sat through the concert added to the pleasure the evening gave me. In our country such concerts are mostly

attended by the so-called elite, the bureaucracy, the politicians of all sorts, and of course those who can wangle an invitation.

The Stalinabad Theatre staged an enjoyable performance of *Laila and Majnun*. This was also in Tadzhik and therefore not beyond my comprehension.

The former USSR was a federal polity, a number of republics forming the union. The differences between north and south, as in India, for instance, were said to be many and varied. But who will not agree that there exists between north and south in India a bond that is both ancient and deep? Except for some politically oriented iconoclasts of the south, the Hindus worship the same gods in north and south. More than that, the great epics so dear to the hearts of most in the north and the universally respected Upanishads and several other ancient books of philosophy and learning have millions of adherents in the south. The Sanskrit language, though no longer a spoken tongue, continues to hold sway over the minds of scholars as much in the south as in the north. There has been, besides, over the centuries cultural intercourse through the movement of saints and scholars between these two extreme parts of the country. On the other had, it is well nigh impossible to discover anything in common between people living in the north and those in the south of the former USSR. And yet the country seemed to be well knit together. There were no problems on the surface, at least of regional rivalries, dissipating national energy, as happens in India. I was a little surprised to find that in the republics that I visited in the former USSR there were foreign ministers. The constitution even gave to the republics the right to secede from the union. All the same, there was no doubt in my mind that whether in Georgia, Uzbekistan, or Tadzhikistan, all of them very different in vital

respects from the republics in the north, there was the fullest awareness among people of the fact that they were citizens of the USSR first, their special cultural interests being adequately taken care of.

Two other things left an abiding impression on me. One was the deep aversion to war that one came across. In Tiflis this was brought home to me in a touching little incident. The wife of the chief architect, herself an architect, was a soft-spoken, kindly woman, very much Indian, as her husband said, in her features. She was giving an account of the misery people had suffered during the war, and when we talked of peace it was not a mere matter of philosophy for her. She said quietly and, it was obvious, with sincerity, "You know my husband was at the front in the last war. You can imagine my anguish for four and a half years, and if there is a war now it will be my son's turn to go. He has come of age." Second, the universities and the academies, with their attached specialized institutions were perhaps the most important factor responsible for the progress of science in the former USSR and thereby the elevation of a backward country to the status of a superpower in the short span of thirty years or so. These centres of teaching and research were interested in and familiar with each other's activities. The academies had a coordinating body at the federal level. In this way educational and cultural effort had a national bias and was a unifying force.

I did not make a special study of the employment situation in the former USSR. There was no unemployment among educated people. For boys and girls coming out of the secondary schools there were the technical and vocational schools and of course the universities. A theoretical explanation of the reported absence of unemployment of the educated in what was the USSR can be that

socialist planning is more successful than ours is, in a mixed system, in establishing a balance between the man-power needs of society and the end products of its schools and universities. This could be an achievement of no mean order.

From Russia my party left for Sweden. We were now on our own. As official guests in the former USSR we not only had received hospitality in respect of food and lodging and transport in ample measure, but what was equally, if not more, valuable was the variety and richness of experience we gained from visits to places and discussions. There was an official programme, but within the time available the facilities offered enabled us to see and know much that might not otherwise have been possible. It may be that something was left unseen that would have been useful from our point of view. That, however, remains only a presumption.

In the absence of these advantages, I felt rather lonely during the rest of the tour and, furthermore, I was obsessed with a feeling that I should economise in my board and lodging expenses. The rules allowed only for actual expenses, but I was not sure what the auditor would consider "adequate and reasonable." The consideration that I was in charge of the Finance Department put an additional brake on the expenses I incurred. Though the present-day ravages caused by inflation were unknown at that time, the prices were pretty high, particularly for food at the hotels where I stayed. As a result, I wandered about the streets in search of cheap eating places. Sometimes the hotel where I stayed itself had upper- and lower-class restaurants, without these labels being clearly indicated. I chose the cheaper of the two occasionally.

As in the former USSR, so in the Scandinavian countries, and in a small way in England, I combined sightseeing with business such as I thought impinged on my

official duties in the departments of planning and finance. In Sweden and Denmark my time was almost wholly devoted to economic and academic matters. First, about Norway, a small country with an abundance of water, rugged mountains with forests, and fjords, which are vast expanses of seawater hemmed in by mountains and forming very large lakes. Norway struck me as an exceedingly beautiful country. Knowledgeable people compared certain parts of it through which we travelled to Switzerland, giving Norway higher status in scenic beauty and natural splendour. Travelling through the heart of Norway from Oslo, we reached Fagerness by train and from there we took the bus up to Lerdale, where at a comfortable but ordinary hotel we spent the night. The next morning we took the steamboat over a famous fjord. From the other bank of this vast lake we were taken by a waiting bus that climbed a mountainous road full of curves with ease, and in the evening we reached Stalheim, a tiny spot with a tourist hotel without the trappings of a three- or five-star hotel, but decent and comfortable, providing the basic requirements of a tourist at reasonable cost. The hotel was the only building at this height. It marked a stage for rest and sight-seeing on the road from the fjord to other towns. The sight worth seeing was a nearby forest from where one could have a view of the valley below. A spot duly marked by a pillar was said to be a favourite of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, who visited it twenty-five times, in token of which there was an inscription on the pillar.

Sailing over the vast lake mentioned above for a number of hours was an exhilarating experience. There were snow-covered mountains, a large lake, and the sea, a unique conjuncture. There were small huts on the banks of the lake with neat hill farms laid out. Raising of sheep, foxes, and cows were common occupations of these hill

farmers living so near the North Pole, away from centres of civilisation, and almost blocked to water traffic for several months of the year. They did, indeed eke out a precarious living. When steamboat service did not reach them they travelled over long trails called goat tracks, which were pointed out to us, to reach the nearest point of embarkation. A fellow passenger on the boat philosophised that life had been going on in this manner for thousands of years. He was an American-born resident of these hills and did not appear to be unhappy over his or his fellow farmers' condition. After all, they did have electricity, he said, and schools, too. Weekly visits of doctors were also received by them. From May to September, which was the best part of the year, life could be easy and pleasant. For the remaining months it was not difficult to imagine what it was like. The government heavily subsidized people in these parts in various ways.

We drove down the road from Stalheim, the next morning to Voss, another tourist spot of incredible attractiveness. It was a small, clean town on the side of a lake in an area studded with rolling meadows. From Voss an eighteen-hour train journey back to Oslo took us through countryside, about which I noted:

> This is said to be the most suitable time for visiting Norway. Spring in all its glory is here. On both sides of the track streams with blue and transparently clear water flow, with trees and flowers in full bloom on their banks. There are lakes everywhere. The villages are surprisingly clean, quiet, and sparsely populated. Invariably, one sees them nestling on slopes of hills. Here and there a large village or town appears in the midst of trees and water. Can anyplace in Kashmir beat this part of Norway?

Norway was a small country that today has a population of 5 million. Arable land was only 5 percent of the total area, but the country is richly endowed with water and forests. Though not as prosperous as her neighbour Sweden, Norway is economically quite advanced. People live well and long, with a life expectancy claimed to be as high as seventy. Fertilizer and aluminium are important products. The country produces its own animal food and dairy products but has to import cereals. Timber exporting and tourism are important activities. In the absence of railways running through parts of the country that are an attraction to tourists, a network of good roads with comfortable hotels at convenient places had been constructed and seemed to be efficiently maintained. Equally impressive was the system of transport, in the form of clean and tidy buses driven by friendly and courteous drivers who were their own conductors. Overcrowding in them is totally unknown. Obsessed as we are in India with the requirements of millionaire tourists who alone, we think, want to visit and tour India, and for whom we invest fabulous sums, including precious foreign exchange in the raising and equipping of five-star hotels, Norwegians seemed to be totally oblivious to their existence, or the private investors think primarily of the economics of the enterprise and provide decent but simple board and lodging. The cost is reasonable because the size of the enterprise is modest, as also are the kinds of equipment and other perks. The tourism industry, being seasonal, can be very costly if the facilities providing the infrastructure are conceived on a grandiose scale. I am sure the Norwegian practice has proved beneficial both to tourism and the investors.

I had looked forward to my visit to Sweden and Denmark with special interest. Sweden was known to be one

of the richest countries, with individual Swedes enjoying a very high level of economic well-being. This was the result as much of a high rate of economic growth as of Sweden's highly developed social welfare system operated within a parliamentary type of government. The Swedish "middle way" was quite famous, and I knew about it. I had also been enlightened by Professor Palandar, a Swedish professor, a long time ago at Johns Hopkins University in the United States. I wanted to see all this and much more. Cooperatives in Sweden and the forestry institute in Stockholm were the main attractions, and of course a visit to Professor Palandar at the ancient University of Uppsala was uppermost in my mind.

Cooperatives in Sweden—in Denmark also—represent a way of life, in the sense that they have come to be a normal form of economic activity, in much the same way as it is normal for a person to open a shop or establish a factory. They are not meant to serve a specific purpose in the context of a special situation. We started them in India to provide much-needed credit facilities for the rural poor and/or help the government distribute goods in short supply. These societies produce goods and purchase and sell them in a competitive system claiming no concession from the government. They pay taxes. Their share of total production in the country in some categories of goods may be so large that they can exercise an influence on the market price. The government, significantly enough, has nothing whatsoever to do with them. The central societies, which provide audit facilities to affliated societies, are independent organisations and are also responsible for running educational institutions where personnel working in the societies are trained.

I knew a little about the working of the cooperative societies in Jammu and Kashmir. Even assuming that

much improvement has taken place in them since I lost touch with them, there is much in the Swedish societies that makes them different from our societies and perhaps superior to them.

In the company of Professor Palandar I visited two sales shops of a consumers' society in Uppsala. They were general stores selling everything from watches and boxes to fruit. There were no sales assistants. You picked out your purchases and paid the labelled price at the counter. I purchased a box and a watch. They are with me still in a functional condition after over twenty-five years of use. The financial condition of the two societies was sound. There were no defalcations and no lifters of goods, nor was there difficulty in finding officials to work here. In fact, some people preferred, out of devotion to an ideal, working in these societies to government service. The ideal is not for the societies to make a profit or to bring men of limited means together for a particular economic function. I learnt about this at the Stockholm consumers' society. Its name notwithstanding, the society owned factories where goods were produced on a large scale. The society sold them to societies within Sweden and abroad. Similarly, it bought locally and from foreign countries. Large trading transactions took place in this manner, for instance, with the former USSR and Turkey. The production and trade were, therefore, on a considerable scale. Financially sound and its activities covering the country, the society was well entrenched in the economic system of the country. But this was not of as much significance as the social objectives that this society, like, indeed, the entire cooperative movement, had set for itself. By strengthening itself and widening the scope of its activities the aim was to influence the working of the capitalist order itself.

Through the good offices of our diplomatic mission I was fortunate enough to meet Mr. Aims, the youthful secretary of the board of directors of the Stockholm consumers' society. He gave me several hours of his valuable time. A refined person with a keen and sensitive mind, Mr. Aims was in the cooperative movement because he was inspired with an ideal. He impressed me with the depth of his conviction in the potential effectiveness of this instrument for bending capitalism to the service of society and bringing about international understanding and friendship. He has written a book on the subject and addressed the House of Commons in London. There seemed to be a romantic streak in his outlook, but more strikingly he symbolised the moral aspect of the movement. Men and women of probity and high principle like him, I thought, must be the sheet anchor of the movement, and this helped me to put my finger on the most sensitive spot in our own movement, as I had known it.

Danish cooperatives were equally educative. Before, however, passing on to them, my visit to the Forest Bureau and the Institute for Forestry Research in Stockholm and the University of Uppsala has to be described. At the first two places I had the good fortune of meeting amiable and competent people who gave me an interesting and instructive bird's-eye view of the chief features of forest management and economics concerning Sweden's forests. They spent a whole morning with me, and considering their status and busy official life I felt grateful to them for this gesture. At the bureau I learnt that only 25 percent of the forest area was under government ownership and management. There was a state board for managing these forests, which were called crown forests. A quarter of the area was owned by companies and the rest by private

farmers. Privately owned forests were under the supervision of a national board designed to enforce scientific standards of forest management. Private forest owners received, on payment of a fee, extensive training in methods of conserving and exploiting the forests' wealth. Rather oddly, private forests were managed better than the crown forests and the government at that time was not eager to hand to the board for crown forests such privately owned forest areas as were, under law, passing into its hands owing to the absence of any legal inheritors for them. There was no practice of selling parts of forests on payment of a price to private businessmen, as is or used to be the general practice in my state. The private owners paid income tax and property tax to the government and the county council. Crown forests were, of course, managed by the government.

Owing to the limited time at our disposal, the economics of forests could not be discussed in detail against the background of forestry management and the country's economy in general, but the broad indication was that the state and the private owners were happy, each for their own reasons, in their respective sectors. The private sector seemed to be economically viable, providing good revenue to the government.

The Institute for Forestry Research, located in pleasant suroundings, also held me spellbound. I understood precious little. The institute was researching, among other things, forest genetics and forest production. The latter, I understood, included study of yearly increments and losses. Sweden, I was told, was the first country to count all its trees.

I drove to Uppsala, which is at a distance of about fifty miles from Stockholm. It was early spring and my ride took me over a road that ran through miles and miles

of tulip fields. Uppsala, with a population of 146,192, is a university town, some of the buildings looking as ancient as the university. I reached the Institute of Economics without much difficulty, but Professor Palandar, who was the main object of my visit to the university, was not in his offfice. I was escorted by a bespectacled young man to a large hall where lighted chandeliers and large columns were matched, in the effect of their glamour, by an audience of about five thousand people, dons and students and members of the public of different age groups, youthful people as well as sedate and solemn, well-dressed elderly men and women. I had been told at some length about seven years ago in Chicago by Professor Palandar about the ancient ways of his university, which included the rather cumbersome procedure for granting a doctorate degree to candidates. Incidentally, it is for this degree only that a diploma is issued. For other degrees a letter is considered adequate. One can earn a doctorate after one's dissertation is published and exhibited at bookshops for a minimum period of six months. Thereafter the university appointed its challengers, who questioned the value of the book before the tribune, where, publicly, these inquisitors, so to speak, tried to destroy the claim of the candidate for a doctorate on the basis of his book. I had, entirely by chance, landed on such a trial. There at the far end of the hall as I entered it I could see seated on one side of platform two men in their lawyers' robes, and I guess there was a judge solemnly seated at the centre. The interesting feature of the performance, however, was the presence of a well-groomed elderly person who was standing and speaking from a podium. The complete silence that mostly prevailed was occasionally broken by outbursts of laughter from the audience. Since I understood nothing about what was going on, I made a discreet search for somebody in

my row who might know English and care to speak to me. I soon found someone who said that the gentleman at the podium was seeking a doctorate on the basis of his published book, in which he had embodied the results of his research on the abdication of Queen Christina in the seventeenth century. The laughter of the audience was, he said, in appreciation of the effective blows the candidate was dealing on his challengers, who must have spoken earlier. On the termination of the ordeal for this elderly candidate the meeting broke up and I was duly handed to my host, Professor Palandar, who said this performance was a demonstration of what he had told me. He thought the system was archaic and should be changed, one reason, according to him, being that candidates got doctorates when they were too old. I learnt more about the university, which was started centuries ago with the help of private donations but was now wholly financed by the government, leading to much control by the government over the university, though in academic matters it was completely self-governing. The casual remark by the professor that the faculty decisions were not always impartial struck me as noteworthy. *Men in power in the academic world, as much as elsewhere, are the same everywhere,* I thought.

I saw some rare handwritten manuscripts in Sanskrit and Persian besides a large number of old curios that the university owned. My mundane interests like shopping were next taken care of, but only after the professor and his family treated me to an early dinner. The few purchases I had made and which I referred to earlier helped me see a little of the working of the cooperative movement about which the professor, years before, and Mr. Aims, during this visit had spoken to me. The warmth and generosity of treatment received by me from Professor Palandar

and earlier from officers at the Forestry Bureau and Mr. Aims at the consumers' society revealed to me a fact of the Swedish character that is not perhaps very well known.

Now to Denmark. Copenhagen was a pleasant city, not bursting at its seams, like Stockholm, under the strain of too many people and dense traffic. Men on bicycles were a common sight. As at Stockholm, I had the advantage of a philosopher-guide, one Mr. Jensen, a young man trained in economics and secretary to the chairman of the Central Cooperative Committee in Copenhagen. I did not engage him much in talking about Danish cooperatives apart from obtaining an overall picture of the movement. I decided to move, in his company, into the countryside and look rather closely at some typical societies. Mr. Jensen, besides being active in the cooperative movement, was interested in talking about India, its cultural heritage, and the spiritual message of its sages for the Western world, which, according to him, needed a stiff dose of it. It was obvious that Jensen, who was interested in a two-way dialogue, was, however, disappointed, because he knew more than I did about Indian philosophy and was an ardent reader of Swami Vivekananda's writings.

I began my engagements with a tour of the city. It was a conducted tour that was as merciless as it was without much meaning. The conductor was efficient, by constant practice, I believe, in describing each sight as he drove by it by giving its name and a few facts, never allowing the speed of the bus to respect a tourist curiosity. We never stopped until the tour finished. At the end of the tour my mind was a sheer blank in respect of what we had seen, except that two things lingered in my memory, the "Thinker" and the Tivoli Gardens. I took care to revisit these two sights and found the statue a delight.

There are a few salient features of the Danish cooperatives that may be stated here. There are consumers' societies and agricultural production societies, which form the core of the movement. The primary societies in both these fields, which may encompass more than one village, are considered important, in view, perhaps, of the efficient service they render to members. There is a hierarchical structure in which the consumers' primary societies, for example, 2,000 in number, are affiliated to the Danish Co-operative Wholesale Society, which was established in 1896. There is for certain specific purposes a Scandinavian society also. The wholesale society buys and produces goods in its own factories and sells them to member societies. Each society, however, at the primary level and the wholesale, deals with each other as an independent economic organisation with its own autonomous financial systems. The primary societies have their own internal audit arrangement but voluntarily seek audits of their accounts by the wholesale society annually. A more significant service of the latter for the movement as a whole, however, is the elaborate organisation that has been built for education and training. There is a board of representatives of the wholesale society for programming and implementing of activities in this field. The country is divided for this purpose into twenty-seven districts. Each district sends a representative to the board. The chairmen of societies in the districts elect him. The representative, besides being a member of the board, is chairman of the District Education Committee, which is formed of six members elected by executive committees of societies. The district committees, working in collaboration with the managing committee of the board of representatives, supervise the workings of the education and training programme.

There is no government control over these societies,

nor are any subsidies or concessions given to them. The societies pay taxes, like any other business concern. Unlike in Sweden, the primary societies do offer credit facilities to members, but these are limited and there are almost no bad debts.

Our visits to two consumers' societies, one large and another small, and to two farms, again one large and the other small, were rewarding. There were no villages of the sort we were accustomed to: a cluster of houses huddled in limited space. Here, a thousand people or so might live in a village, but households would be scattered over a fairly wide area. We visited a village some forty miles outside Copenhagen and made for its consumers' cooperative. It seemed to sell everything: food of every sort (except meat) for men and animals, hardware, glassware, and chinaware. It had a membership of 240 but sold to nonmembers also. There was a managing committee, obviously elected, and a general manager with four assistants who were all permanent employees, the general manager having a span of twenty-seven years in the service of the society to his credit. There were auditors and accountants. There was a private shop doing almost identical business in the village. The society was on the best of terms with it, and it was open to members to buy from it if they so chose, just as the cooperative sold to nonmembers in the village and outside it. The society received orders on the spot, through personal visits of customers, or on telephone and through canvassing salesmen. The society had over the years been making good. Yearly dividends were declared, but one-third was retained for five years.

The general manager was provided with a flat, which I visited. It had several rooms, with hot and cold water. The other employees also had been provided with residential accommodations. The society's stores, with neatly arranged goods, gave the impression that excessive stock

was deliberately not maintained. On the whole, efficiency was the keynote of management, the main responsibility for which lay with the general manager.

Cooperative effort in agricultural production was rendering equally useful service. Farmers had formed a cooperative society and ran a dairy farm where cheese was a major product. Milk was pooled and with capital initially raised by members and eventually augmented by a portion of earned profits a modern plant had been set up. There were societies for the production and sale of meat and eggs and purchase of inputs like fertilizers. The farmers had also combined to establish an artificial insemination centre and a farmers' union that specialised in offering technical advice on breed types and how to improve upon them. These and other forms of cooperative activity were closely related to agriculture, which was, to my knowledge, a private industry so far as landownership was concerned.

I visited Mr. Karlson's farm, whose size he estimated at eight hundred acres. A cheerful, elderly person, he was completely absorbed in his occupation and seemed to enjoy it. His children, except for one of his seven sons who was in the navy, helped him in his work. His diversified activity was spread over a wide range. He raised wheat, barley, oats and other crops, not including rice, and cows of excellent stock. The care he bestowed on the latter was clearly visible in the hygienic conditions that prevailed in the sheds and the detailed record of the pedigree of each cow, her age, and milk production, which was maintained. The average milk production was stated to be 10,000 pounds a year per cow. He raised bulls, too, and sometimes exported them. His poultry farming was on an equally large scale and had been a successful effort. The main interest of Mr. Karlson was, however, in raising and

exporting pigs, which yielded him maximum income. His membership in cooperatives was extensive and conformed to the pattern of his pursuits on his large farm. His home, which I visited, bore testimony to the success he had achieved on the farm. Asking no personal questions, like whether he paid income tax and had a car, I was content with what I saw, a good house and good furniture and a piano, besides, of course, bicycles, a motorcycle, and a radio.

I paid a visit to a small farmer also. His income, I worked out, did not exceed five hundred rupees per month. He knew auditing and carpentry, both skills being employed by him in supplementing his income. He was a member of several cooperative societies and would not give up his agricultural occupation, which he liked. His cottage, though relatively modest, had an air of comfort, with the usual piano, radio, and adequate furniture.

From Copenhagen we flew to Amsterdam, which is a busy commercial centre. The Dutch are a hospitable people, but it seemed that they were down-to-earth businessmen and did not want to take any risks in dealing with their customers. At the hotel every time that an order was placed for food or something or when one went out an inevitable enquiry was whether you were leaving in the evening or some such question, revealing a nervousness that was difficult to understand. Apart from this minor idiosyncrasy of our hosts, which was quite amusing, our brief stay was pleasant. There was some official business done also. As Amsterdam was an important trading town, it occurred to me that we could see how best to secure a market for the famous arts and crafts of Kashmir. Throughout this tour and much earlier in New York I gave thought to this matter and talked to men in the trade. I

was struck by the almost unlimited possibilities for developing a market for several of our products. It was also evident to me that our embassies could do more in this respect than they were doing. At some missions there was hardly an awareness of the need to move on this matter. I did not allow my two or three days' stay in Amsterdam to go by without discussing the marketing possibilities of Kashmir art products in Europe with important business houses. One of them, Bijenkorf, a big department store, sent their representatives to our hotel for a detailed talk with the governor. Needless to say, our hopes of finding a profitable market for our goods and establishing for this purpose a communications system through our missions were found to be well founded and decisions were made in favour of follow-up action in this regard by us on our return. This was done, but not much practical benefit resulted from the suggestions and recommendations made.

Mr. John Thivy was our ambassador in Amsterdam. Though he was reported to be ailing from a heart condition, he entertained us at his house, where the governor, with a very moving religious song, and Miss Thivy playing on the piano lent colour to the occasion. Mr. Thivy taped the governor's song and looked fit enough. His death within a day of our departure from Amsterdam shocked us, and we felt much sympathy for his family, his daughter particularly, to whom Mr. Thivy was devoted.

In Brussels we visited old buildings in the city square, both of which—buildings and the square—were an impressive sight and are of historical interest. The old trade guilds functioned in some of these buildings a long time ago. In the vicinity of the square there stood the small house where Victor Hugo lived during his exile from France. The very old art of making lace by hand, for which Belgium is known, still provides work to women. We saw

them at work and were struck by the contrast that this industry offered with the modern industrial and commercial life of Belgium. The international trade fair of 1958, which was stated to have been a considerable success, has been commemorated by the construction of Atomom—seven huge spherical objects revolving round a stationary spherical object. At the top of them all the restaurant, which is reached through a lift that shoots up in apparently no time, serves food in a sophisticated fashion.

Belgium has seen two wars in her recent history and suffered much devastation. Sandwiched, so to speak, between Germany and France and choosing the same allies on both occasions, Belgium was the victim of aggression before others. The part of the country through which we travelled—we drove over some 140 miles outside Brussels—was still replete with stories of the grim battles fought. There were also monuments raised to the glory and, I would like to say folly, of man. Not far from Brussels is Waterloo. This humble town, which has been virtually immortalised by the battle of 1815 that ended the Napoleonic wars, has a monument built on a mound to remind posterity of that historic event. We reached the place at nightfall and could not see much, but I felt a thrill expressive perhaps of the deep historical impact of Waterloo. Bastogne is a town near Luxembourg, not far from Germany. We stopped for a brief while and learnt about the bitter battle fought here as the Second World War was drawing to a victorious end for the Allies. (General Patton was reported to have died in an accident here.) There is a good museum here that contains weapons, armour, and uniforms used in this war.

We arrived in London for a week's stay. It was my second visit, as I had come here in 1953 for the first time. Visiting England is interesting in a special way for me, as

I do not feel like a total stranger here. Apart from the obvious advantages for an Indian tourist in his ability to converse in English, there is for him an air of familiarity about some of the more important landmarks of the country. Our intellectual affinity pays some dividends, too. The average Englishman, however is not a quick mixer. His well-cultivated habit of reserve is well known, but equally noticeable are his other traits, like a readiness to help and unfailing courtesy.

I had a few more reasons to be happy. My long association with the Planning Commission in Delhi had earned me the goodwill and consideration of some savants on the commission, one in particular. One gratifying result of this was that some of the foreign visitors to the Planning Commission visiting Kashmir called at the Planning Department. Professor Kalador, the noted economist from the United Kingdom, and Dr. Bellerby of the Oxford Institute of Agricultural Economics are two distinguished names among several professors and journalists from abroad who visited us. Apart from a desire to add to their knowledge of the economics of developing countries, Kashmir exerted a pull on these visitors for other reasons, too. The two professors were, however, almost wholly interested in the way our development programmes were conceived and implemented. We benefited much by these contacts, and it gave us some satisfaction to learn that we were able to offer something meaningful in return to these visitors.

Dr. Bellerby's interest in me and my work did not end with his visit to the Planning Department. The special problems of agricultural development and of cooperatives in the service of agriculture and cottage industries and of industrial change in general continued to receive his attention, and he wrote to me about them. On reaching

London now, I found a letter from him waiting for me. He wanted me to visit Oxford. I did so and spent a full working day with him and his colleagues discussing problems pertaining to economic change in India and Kashmir in particular. Specialists in cooperatives and agriculture, respectively, and a sociologist and a statistician were there. Dr. Bellerby's views on India's economic problems and policies, based as these were on his on-the-spot study, were instructive, particularly those on our cooperative and planning techniques. (Dr. Bellerby's book, *Industry and Agriculture*, to which he made a reference, had been translated into Chinese. He showed me a copy that was, incidentally, the first book in Chinese I ever saw.) The specialist in cooperatives had belonged at one time to the British colonial service. He spoke from both theoretical knowledge and abundant practical experience. Much of what he said, however, was not new to me, and I explained elaborately my experience in this field, the importance of multipurpose societies in preference to singlepurpose cooperatives, and the affiliation of societies for trade purposes to a wholesale organisation being specially emphasised by me. We had been working on these lines in Kashmir. The expert made special mention of the Anglo-Swedish combine that made bulbs on a large scale but found it difficult to compete in the market because affiliated societies were not obliged to buy from the combine, which was a cooperative society. After this major meeting I was taken to discuss agrarian reform and allied matters at another institute.

Dr. Bellerby, with his extremely generous interest in me and my work, filled my day with meetings with many specialists who he thought were dealing with fields relevant to my work in Kashmir. There was much that I missed, in the sense that valuable discussions had to be

cut short, so hard-pressed for time was I. But on the whole the gain was substantial, inasmuch as I felt refreshed and looked at some of my own thoughts from a broader angle.

The Indian high commissioner wanted the governor to address the Indo-British parliamentary group on the subject of Kashmir. The governor and his wife went, as did I. The Indian high commissioner was also present. It was a small group of some sixteen members of parliament assembled in one of the rooms of the House of Commons. Sir Patrick Spens, at one time chief justice of India, chaired the meeting. The governor spoke for thirty minutes or so. Questions followed in quick succession and sometimes with excitement.

My diary records the following notes on this meeting: "The hostility of these people who belong to a group considered to be friendly (to India) is amazing." The refrain (of the comments) was that the government of India had no business in Kashmir, and as one of them put it very frankly, "We have been told by Pakistanis here that Kashmir is dominated by India against the wishes of people and if they [the government of India] held a plebiscite more than 70 percent would vote against India." Only one lady (Miss Lee, wife of Ernest Bevan) said it was useless to ask for Plebiscite because that would generate the same religious passions that brought about such disastrous results at the time of the partition. These MPs seemed to have no ill will against India, but the question: "Why did the government of India at one time reject Nizam's accession to Pakistan while they agreed to the maharaja's?" was posed to me by the chairman when the meeting was over. Such was the temper of the people here.

When we had called on the high commissioner she had told us that this was the position. In fact, the MPs had asked her not to come because they feared that the

governor might not speak frankly in the presence of an official of the government of India. The high commissioner, however, told us that the government's attitude had undergone a change and even these MPs said privately, "We know the status quo has to continue." In fact, Mr. Sorenson, a Labour member of the parliament and said to be a friend of India, did ask a question like this: "Is it possible to make the present division of the state permanent, giving the choice to anybody to go to live in either of the two states?"

I have been, in my own way, a lover of books. Books on economics and political philosophy, biographies of outstanding men and women, and also books of a general interest have been my favourites. I have spent whatever money I could on purchasing them, and while I have not slowed down the pace of my reading, I have over the years developed the habit of buying books just for the pleasure of owning them. There are several that remain unread. I have lent books, reluctantly though, and have sufferred as a consequence. Several of my good books have disappeared mysteriously as a result of poor management of them and my long absence from my hometown. On the other hand, I have profited a great deal from borrowing books, mainly from students, some of whom have risen high in life, their love for reading and keeping books growing with their years and status. In a new town where I arrive, whatever the length of my sojourn, I take myself to the bookshops. In metropolitan London the Economists Shop is an inevitable attraction. On my previous visit I had purchased some books and made arrangments for books and journals to be mailed.

I had been advised to meet people at the office of the *London Economist*, for one of whom I had an introductory

letter. This economist put me wise to the latest books on economic development. Rostov's book on this subject was not yet available, but the economist explained to me its salient features, on which he offered his comments. These provided a valuable background for me when I read the book.

The last city to be visited on this tour was Paris. I was also visiting Paris for the second time. It was glorious weather in which to sit on its wonderful streets and watch the flow of motor traffic, an unending motorcade, which produces a magnificent view at night on such streets as the Champs Élysées, the central street of Paris, the likes of which I had not seen before.

France seemed to be interested in tourism promotion, but it appeared to me that the tourists poured in no matter what the inhibiting factors might be. The tourists must pay dearly for the pleasure of visiting this country. One had to pay a tax on the rent of a room one occupied and on the taxi one hired at the hotel door over and above the charge the meter indicated. Leaving the airport cost us 1,500 francs per person, which was a much higher rate than in other countries of Europe we had visited. The people did not appear to be anxious to be friendly or even courteous. Notwithstanding the fine weather and the several sights of much interest, I would not say, as I did on leaving England, how wonderful it was to have come and how depressing to have to leave so soon.

Chapter VIII
In Delhi and Somalia (East Africa)

I joined the secretariat of the Planning Commission in Delhi in early March 1965. Over the previous fifteen years from almost its inception I had been a frequent visitor to this office. For a large part of this period it was housed in various buildings, until it got its own impressive sprawling brick-coloured building, which I now entered one morning. I did so with subdued feelings and a mixed mood of hope and slight anxiety engendered by the fact that I had struck a new course when I had hardly a year and half to serve. Unfortunately, my first meeting at the commission did little to brighten my spirits. Visiting officers from states have much to do with the Programme Division of the Planning Commission and keep meeting officers there. I chose, therefore, not correctly of course, to act likewise on this occasion and reported for duty to the chief of the division. I expected a warm welcome, as I had known him for years. It was a very cold meeting. Seldom have I encountered such stuffiness, which in all probability was a reaction to a man from the "hills" coming to occupy a position similar to his. I was coming as a chief in one of the units of a new division that had been created. I did not take much time to retrace my steps and did what should have been done on my arrival. The joint secretary (administration) whom I met next extended me a welcome, and I was soon quite at home, when I met my men and found my work place.

After signing necessary papers, I sought an interview with the member of the commission for whom I was to work. I must mention a few facts about the member.

Mr. Tarlok Singh was my member and benefactor. I had known him for long years. In the olden days of British rule, he combined with his administrative duties as a member of the famed Indian civil service a keen desire to reflect and write upon measures whereby economic problems of the country, particularly rural, could be tackled. Before independence he wrote a small book titled *Poverty and Social Change*. Over the years he sustained this interest, and it was almost inevitable that he should be assigned a key position in the secretariat of the Planning Commission right from the beginning. His knowledge of and training in economics and his large administrative experience apart, his lifelong interest in the country's economic and social problems, which called for change, made him preeminently suitable for the tasks that the commission had undertaken. The field was now vast and the opportunity full of promise for him. It was common knowledge that he threw himself heart and soul into this work. It was not long before he became the lynchpin of the commission and rose in status quickly. He was finally elevated to a place on it. Hard work alone did not satisfy him. He worked incredibly long hours, but his forte was his search for new ideas. For this purpose, and to keep his feet well on the ground and learn as much as possible about the actual conditions obtaining in the various states, he cultivated a circle of friends and acquaintances among those concerned with the preparation and carrying out of development plans all over the country. His charm of manner and abundant courtesy helped him in this.

Thus it was that in the early fifties I came to know him. We in this state were novices, slightly more than

other states, in the new field of economic planning. Advice and help were offered by him. This early interest of his in Kashmir grew over the years so that during the bleak days of the 1965 hostilities with Pakistan, when I was at the commission, he took extraordinary interest in finding out the particular difficulties that some people in the Kashmir valley were facing and brought these problems to the notice of the appropriate authorities in the central government for redress. All these qualities would make anybody a formidable figure. Additionally, situated as he was in the Planning Commission, he was reported to be quite close to the prime minister (Nehru) whose own interest in the work of the commission was close and profound. I was of course impressed above all by the spirit of dedication that Singh brought to his work and it seemed as if he was inspired by patriotic fervour and a conviction, in all humility though, that his efforts must be devoted to the noble cause of removal of Indian poverty. As a frequent visitor to the commission I had become aware of the existence there of unfriendly feelings towards the member, but I could not know the cause. Later, when I had spent some time as an officer at the commission, I had reason to believe that there were some senior officers who, like some others around, were not among Singh's admirers. (I discovered also that, as in my own modest case in my state, one important reason could be the inevitable hostility, that a hardworking officer who by virtue of his work and other qualities, which in Singh's case were exceptional, might be going ahead faster or exercising wider, though wholesome, influence on men and matters, than was to the liking of his peers provokes among them.) Unfortunately, however, there was a positive element, too, in the situation. The member was like the proverbial banyan tree under which nothing grows. Friends and foes,

equals and subordinates, felt they were made to wither. I had myself some such experience.

What was my assignment at the Planning Commission? A new organisation called the Development Administration Unit had been set up and I was to head it. The unit, which was the brain child of my member (Singh), worked, in a sense, at the periphery of the planning process, inasmuch as it would not participate in the process of plan fromulation but with certain aspects of implementation.

The execution of plans had thrown up serious problems. A brief discussion of these would be useful.

After more than three decades of planning there was evidence of change in various fields of the economy. Much has been written about the foundation that has been laid for a radical transformation of the economy eventually from a predominantly agricultural one into a modern industrial one. These gains, by no means inconsiderable, were overshadowed by a number of shortcomings that led to cost overruns on projects, inordinate delay in their construction and over–financial budgeting, combined with large shortfalls in the achievement of physical targets envisaged in the plans. There were several other adverse results.

Experience helped pinpoint some of the more important factors responsible for the situation. The major portion of the plans being in the public sector, the projects and schemes were in the hands of agencies of the government. From law and order maintenance as their prime responsibility, or at best maintaining of a few works, the public servants were now saddled with new duties. The tasks related to project implementation were entirely new. They demanded qualities of leadership and good managerial ability and a sense of commitment to achievement of

targets. Additionally, the old system of powers, financial and administrative, exercised by civil servants in the past was inadequate for new tasks, which required more than anything else quick decisions at all levels, particularly the project execution level. Reporting of progress during the course of execution of projects and schemes at regular intervals was almost unknown in the early years of plan implementation. Besides, the visible targets included in the annual departmental budgets were only financial. An assessment of progress in financial terms was made only at the end of the year. The physical targets remained hidden, so to speak, in the blueprints of projects and schemes. Here was an area that called for attention. The interrelationship between financial provisions in the budget and physical targets to be achieved was to be established and made visible so that physical progress of project implementation could be monitored. Progress reporting as a regular managerial practice needed to become an integral feature of project administration, leading to periodic evaluation of results achieved.

These were some of the more important concepts that formed the basis of the new discipline—if that word is appropriate—of development administration. I was well versed in them and quite familiar with their administrative implications.

Yet when I started work I did ask myself the question: what is development administration? I had the advantage of having a competent staff of men possessing knowledge and experience in accounting and public finance. Slowly we saw our way through a maze of uncertainties until problems got concretised, and during the brief period that I was at the commission two problems, relating to budgeting and accounting, and the third, to administration of agricultural inputs, received our maximum attention. It

was the result of the efforts of this unit brought to fruition a short time after my departure from the commission that a case was made for physical and performance planning and its induction into the budget. This came to be known as performance budgeting, which is now accepted policy for the presentation of a development programme in the central budget. Similarly we worked on the question of bringing about harmony between account heads in the budget and the plan heads. This was tried in respect of some ministerial budgets in the central government. Changes in account heads were formulated after some time, and the present budgetary classification embodies them. In regard to administration of agricultural inputs, our work, so far as I was concerned, did not go very much beyond field enquiries made with the help of a design devised by one of our experts. One of the districts in Uttar Pradesh was selected, which a few of us visited for a period of ten days. High-quality seed and its production and distribution from the time that the seed was multiplied with the help of mother seed on farms and distributed through cooperative societies was the subject on which main attention was focused. The report based on the enquiry never went past the four walls of the unit. The conclusions drawn were so unsavoury and uncomplimentary to agencies in charge of the programme of seed distribution. As we studied closely the actual achievements of the policy of coordinated development that the block development officer was expected to enforce, we were impressed with the immensity of the difficulties involved. Coordination indeed was conspicuous by its absence.

In the winter of 1965, sitting in my office, I received an unexpected call. The Administration Department was enquiring whether I would be interested in a UN assignment in Somalia. I had heard of Somaliland, Italian and

British, but not of Somalia. There were no details given, but subsequently the letter from the United Nations setting forth the nature of the assignment, the duration, and a few other particulars of the job was sent to me. I was not much enthused by the idea of having to live in Africa for a year. So I said in reply to the enquiry that I would make up my mind in a day or two and let the department know. Apparently satisfied, the officer calling allowed the matter to rest there. But he was soon at it again. The boss was going on leave, and he wanted to dispose of the matter before that. I was asked to give a reply, positive or otherwise, and at that very moment. I said I was prepared to accept the assignment. It was, however, in the summer of 1966 that the offer matured and I started making preparations to earn my living beyond the shores of India. The first thing I did was get hold of all the literature that there was on Somalia in the Planning Commission Library, which was much too meagre to give one anything like a satisfactory idea of what the climate, people, government, living conditions, etc., were like. A publication was, however, received from the UN headquarters or their representatives in New Delhi dealing rather elaborately with these matters. It was not a recently written book, and it was obvious it had been written with a view to preparing the visitor for the worst of all conditions. I was certainly filled with a feeling of dismay and did express my hesitation to a friend working at the Delhi office of the United Nations. Good as he was, he pleaded with me not to stop my name from going to New York, because he felt that much opportunity for international jobs was missed by Indians because recommendations seldom went in time. If, he said, I was selected and I chose not to go, that was the proper time to decline the offer, because in that event, my name

would be on the roster and other assignments could come my way. I accepted his advice.

So I went to Somalia on a UN assignment in early August 1966. I stayed there right up to the end of 1971. Occasionally visits were paid to India and one each to Nairobi and UN headquarters in New York.

An experienced and well-known educationist who had been my boss for a number of years when I was serving in the Education Department of my state once told me while we were discussing the subject of UN assignments that once one proceeds on a job like this one is mentally (was that the word he used, or something more sophisticated, such as *intellectually* or *spiritually*?) dead. With hindsight I find it very easy to say his statement was true.

The UN organisation was established at the conclusion of the Second World War, like its predecessor the League of Nations, to provide for nation-states a forum where they could meet to resolve their political disputes, thus avoiding military conflict. Apart from this fundamental objective, which provided the raison d'être for this international body, there were other important, though ancillary, purposes that it sought to serve. These are its social and economic fuctions. A number of autonomous bodies, all of them, in a sense, the offspring of the main body, but within their domain operationally independent, came into existence. The more important of them are the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The International Monetary Fund (IMF), established in 1945 to assist countries suffering from shortages of foreign exchange

and in adequate management of international finance, was a necessary element in this international setup. While the UNDP was concerned primarily with helping underdeveloped countries in the process of development, the other organisations had the same aim, though perhaps not in an exclusive sense. Obviously, development being an organic process, the handling by a number of organisations of both general and specific aspects of a country's development programme was bound to result in much duplication of effort and absence of a total and integrated view of the development process. The UNDP, which sponsored technical aid programmes in the form of individual experts in various fields of development in a country, had a resident representative stationed in the field who was supposed to exercise supervision and effect coordination among various programmes. I was an expert under one of the technical aid programmes of the UNDP. Budget and financial administration was the sphere in which I was to render technical advice.

The political utility of the UN organisation has been the subject of much controversial debate over the years, but the worthy functionaries at the top of this august body have from time to time patted themselves on the back over the success of their effort in advancing the developmental intersts of poor nations. My limited experience, which relates to a single field of activity and to one country, though I daresay I am not unaware of similar experiences of a few others in other countries, is that the self-congratulation is unmerited.

The large number of organisations interested in development apart, as mentioned above, the basic tenets of the programme that were rubbed into us—that is, the field personnel in general—in no unmistakable terms militated against the successful achievement of the very aim that

the programme had set for itself. The expert is only an advisor. He has no executive functions, and as a consequence it is no business of his to see what happens to his advice so far as its implementation goes. The expert is on the periphery of the country's administrative setup. It seems to me the developing countries seeking technical assistance in this manner want to have their cake and eat it, too. Any serious effort on the part of the UN advisor in respect of the implementation of an advice would be taken as an inroad into the country's independence.

The do's and don'ts are set out elaborately in booklets and letters, which an expert receives on taking up the assignment, and from time to time he receives more of them, though they largely relate to administrative matters. The work that he is supposed to do is described in what is known as his job description. Thereafter so far as the technical aspects of his assignment are concerned he is almost entirely on his own. He submits quarterly reports that contain an account of his accomplishments and difficulties. This receives comments that are of a routine nature, a few suggestions and questions, and sometimes a few words of encouragement. There is no attempt at the outset to formulate the objectives as concretely as possible of the assistance the expert is to render, the job description being very general in nature, nor is a periodic evaluation made of his achievements and, what is important, of the causes of slow progress. Indeed, for professional purposes the expert receives neither guidance nor help in the removal of what he may consider formidable bottlenecks in his work. So far as administrative support for his assignment is concerned in the form of secretariat assistance, the terms and conditions of leave and allowances, besides of course his basic salary, the headquarters—that is, his employer in New York—is preeminently liberal. It is obvious,

however, that there is complete lack of knowledge on the part of headquarters of local conditions, like the local administrative structure, the trainable nature or otherwise of the host country's personnel, their attitude towards work and general habits of discipline, and a whole host of other relevant factors that go to make the local ethos in which the expert is supposed to work and produce an impact in as brief a period of time as possible. What is not easy to appreciate is headquarters' apparent reluctance to know and sympathise when the man in the field mentions these matters.

The resident representative, it can be said, is expected to provide the answer to these problems. This may well be, but as the system functioned during my years of service with the UNDP, there was a lot of ambiguity about the position of the resident representative in this regard. He was the link, so to speak, between the experts and the country government, because it was laid down that he was to bring to the notice of the government the former's difficulties and in other ways facilitate his work. It was not, however, stated that the expert owed allegiance for the due discharge of his functions to the resident representative, or that the latter was the executive in charge of the execution of all the programmes in the country. The expert worked in a ministry of the government, where he was to associate closely with a local officer who was designated as his counterpart, the idea theoretically being that the latter should in course of time absorb all the "wisdom" of the expert and eventually render him dispensable. The expert thus became for all practical purposes a functionary of the ministry and with the load of instruction on his back that enjoined him not to lose sense of his identity or do more than he legitimately might, he tried to make himself useful to the ministry according to his lights in the

context, of course, of the basic framework of his job description. He submits his quarterly reports directly to New York and corresponds with them in this manner on all matters connected with his assignment. He only keeps the resident representative informed of what takes place between him and the headquarters. Thus an expert can, if he is so minded and knowing, as he does, that he scarcely receives any meaningful assistance from the resident representative in his work directly or has been ever called by him for discussion of the progress of his project and related matters, offer him such obeisance as his instructions from headquarters oblige him to or formalities of social intercourse demand. For the rest, the expert may not be aware of the representative's existence. But this would be possible only in the rarest of cases. For, generally speaking, assignments in the beginning are for the briefest possible period. It is usually a year, even though the assignment may relate to projects that are part of a programme whose life time has been estimated in advance. The United Nations seems to betray want of self-confidence. They do not know what might happen to the project or what kind of person is being employed. It is a gamble on which they seem to be embarking. Therefore, let the project run for a year. The seeds of failure of the project have been laid.

The resident representative becomes in this situation a key figure not by virtue of the sustained interest he takes in the fate of the projects that are under implementation, because he takes hardly any worthwhile interest in them, but because, among other things, he is the arbiter of the destiny of the expert, whether he should stay or go. This seems to me the worst possible fate that could befall a sensitive expert who may have during a lifetime of public service managed to keep his head high. He does, for very understandable reasons, want to continue on the job, but

he comes to realise that the interplay of forces on the question of his continuance or otherwise is such as makes it impossible for the merits of the case alone to be the deciding factor. It is the resident representative who suddenly appears on the surface of things, because now the country's programme is to be drawn up by him in collaboration with the government of the country, which would include mention of experts who are to continue for yet another year.

During my experience of about five years and a half I came to know a number of resident representatives and their deputies of various nationalities. They came from Pakistan, Canada, the USSR, India, Syria, and Finland. As the nature of their job demanded, the resident representatives tried to establish proper rapport with the government of the country to which they were assigned. Some of them gained a considerable amount of confidence in them from the latter, so that, in this manner, they obtained a measure of support and cooperation from the country during their tenure. Equipped with this additional source of power vis-à-vis both the headquarters in New York and the field staff, the resident representative comes to possess more authority than responsibility. The government considers him useful in several ways. He is the window for them to look through at the world of facilities of various kinds available outside the confines of their country for economic development. He may help them in obtaining special projects, but his main utility lies in getting men and money for them. Or so they think. The experts in various fields, of different ages and capabilities, some on the higher rungs of the service and some on the lower (UN service is a model of hierarchical edifice both at its headquarters and in the field, with a carefully devised graded structure) look to the resident representative for a

smile, for, their period of incumbency being very brief, he can make or mar their prospects for a fresh lease on life in their jobs. And the allure of this unseemly conduct is the size of the pay packet. The resident representative is busy, very busy indeed. I always wondered what exactly was the end product of his activities and of his large complement of staff. The form and methods of work in his office are certainly of exemplary efficiency, but much of the work relates to administrative matters, his correspondence fanning out in two directions, namely towards headquarters and the government of the country. Not much happens that may have a bearing on the progress of development projects. Indeed the office of the resident representative should be the focal point for all men and matters relating to projects to converge for a personal discussion of development problems. This happens but rarely. During my entire tenure I attended one meeting of this kind, and that, too, in the first year of my sojourn. Never thereafter.

The personality of a resident representative does make a difference, as my experience was to show amply. As my plans to leave for Somalia began to take shape I learnt from New York and from the resident representative in Somalia, who was an Asian, that I was to function as a member of a team one of whom was to have some sort of precedence over the others, though that was not quite clearly stated. In view of the ambivalent state of my mind in regard to the acceptance of the assignment and feeling that it was too late in the day for me to begin a new career as a subordinate with somebody ordering me about I wrote to the Asian gentleman in Somalia seeking clarification of the nature of my status on the team. I also called on the New Delhi resident representative of the

UNDP, laying before him my problem. Suave and sympathetic as the latter was, he said it was not possible for him to come into the picture at that stage and that if I had any reservations I should not proceed to Somalia. From Somalia, however, the resident representative sent me a letter that decided the matter for me, because it set my doubts at rest. He said in effect that nobody was under anybody in the team and that each of us was to function independently in the domain set for him and we were to work with the director general in the Finance Ministry, the highest local executive in the ministry, corresponding to our secretary to government. Besides this clarification, the letter marshalled out in clear detail the kind of environment in terms of climatic, medical, and housing conditions, people and local functionaries in the ministry, the social life, and other pertinent matters relating to life in general that I was going to find in Somalia. It was persuasively written and had the air of a letter that a business executive eager to push his sales might write to a foreign customer. Loyalty to his assignment and a keen awareness of his role as an international civil servant were the chief qualities of this admittedly likeable person, as I was later to observe.

We have had scant knowledge of Africa, of the geography, cultural, and economic condition of over forty countries that make up this continent. Somalia, so near India, I hardly knew. When I flew from Delhi with my wife on the morning of August 4, 1966, we could have reached Mogadishu, the capital of the country, in the evening the same day, if we had not missed the Air India Boeing that I was supposed to catch in Bombay. The plane by which we were to travel from Delhi to Bombay arrived an hour or so late, and so we were half an hour too late when we did arrive in Bombay. Right at the start of my

mission to Somalia this was a bit of bad luck, because the flights leaving India for Europe via Aden did not have for travellers to Somalia the facility of the earlier connecting service plying between Aden and Mogadishu, a flying time of not even two hours. This service ceased operating and the result was that we were impounded, so to say, in Bombay for three days and when we arrived in Aden on the fourth we had to halt there for the night, in sweltering heat at a very uncomfortable hotel.

We reached Somalia on the fifth day. The local UN office always made adequate arrangements for arriving and departing experts. A hefty Somali official in uniform who turned out to be the driver of the vehicle meant to be our transport accosted us and saw us through the formalities at the immigration and customs desks. I walked away from the customs and other counters to be met by a few Indian personnel of the United Nations. Among them was one member of the finance team. The other member, being indisposed, had taken thoughful care to send his wife to receive us. My wife and I were lodged in one of the three hotels in the city, a government undertaking. We stayed here for eighteen days, which I spent meeting UN officers to be briefed on such matters as how and where to select a residential house, some of the precautions to be taken for protection of health and property, and how to engage and deal with domestic help.

The resident representative being absent on leave, I got my first serious introduction to my job from his deputy, a Syrian gentleman, young, intelligent, and strong and full of information about local conditions. The genial warmth of his nature and his unflagging readiness to help during the next two years, after which he left the country on transfer, are an abiding memory with me. He accompanied me to the Finance Ministry, where I was presented

to the director general as the third member of the finance team. The director general, an ex–army officer, and a trimly dressed gentleman, talked exuberantly, welcoming me with some warmth. Coffee obtained in small glasses from the nearest shop in the street was served. As a result, perhaps, of the Italian influence coffee and tea drinking was very common here. One has to develop a taste for the coffee, however. After sipping my coffee, I sensed a peculiar taste in my mouth. I could never avoid this after-taste, coffee addict as I grew to be during my stay in the country. The coffee we drank was a milder version of the genuine beverage. There were grades of strength of coffee, all bearing a local name, the strongest being a dark liquid served always without milk and looking as threatening as it must be pungent to taste. At all formal or informal meetings in the offices the practice was to offer one or the other variety of coffee, tea, or soft drink, the host paying out of his pocket as the order was placed. So the director general did at our meeting, which ended on the hope that the government's financial system would substantially improve during the next three or four years.

After the meeting I went back to my hotel, only to hunt during the next two weeks for a house with the help of an agent recommended by the assistant resident representative. I was also waiting for an office to work in. The Finance Ministery was hard pressed for office space but hoped to find a place for me. In the meantime, I was advised to go through the financial literature of the government that was handed to me. It consisted of a small book or two setting out the financial regulations of the state. I found them fairly comprehensive and simple in presentation.

It was eighteen days after our arrival that we found a roof over our heads and I also got a room in the ministry,

happily set apart from the main bulk of rooms. It was not meant to be assigned to me permanently, but I found the room relatively quiet and managed to keep it for the entire period of my sojourn in Somalia, that is, about five and a half years.

First, as regards the country, Somalia is on the eastern coast of the horn of Africa. It is a tropical country, the climate being hot and humid almost throughout the year. There is some fall in temperature in July, when the first rainy season sets in—there are two—and there is some improvement in the weather. On the whole the climate is rather enervating. The people, almost wholly professing Islam, are not of pure Negroid extraction. They have racially some affinity with the Arabs. While the colour of their skin is generally dark and hair frizzy, the number of fair and brown people is impressively large. The southern part of the country had been an Italian colony for a long time when a break occurred during the Second World War. The northern part had been British, and they also ruled over the south during the Second World War. After a brief stint under UN trusteeship, north and south merged into Somalia in 1960, when it became a sovereign state.

People mainly lived in the bush, their source of living being the raising of cattle, sheep, and goats, in the care of which they roamed from pasture to pasture. They were thus basically a nomadic people, settled urban or rural communities being very few in number. Agricultural pursuits had barely begun. While they mainly fed themselves on meat and milk, their bovine population being plentiful, they needed to import sorghum to supplement the little food they grew themselves. The mainstay of the economy was the export of cattle and bananas. Their cows and buffalo were rated very highly on the international market, as also were the sheep and goats that were raised in the

north. Mineral resources were not known to be available except for uranium, whose existence has been established and commercial exploitation was under consideration. Some industrial activity, like the manufacture of sugar and textiles and production of tinned meat through modern processes, had made a beginning, though it was too early to say, during my tenure of service, whether their condition had become stabilised and they could become, the textile and the meat factory in particular, economic propositions.

The people, that is, those with whom I came into contact, close or otherwise, like men in offices, businessmen, the taxi drivers, and maidservants—male servants are negligible in number—were friendly. They do not have the pugnacity generally associated with some tribes of this continent. They were prone, however, to create considerable fuss over what they consider their dues if employed as domestic help. Industrially backward though the country is, its erstwhile Italian masters had blessed it with labour laws that, considering their liberal content, would do credit to an advanced country.

I noticed a certain amount of contrariness in the character and social behaviour of these people. They were in all strata of society a proud people, prouder still of their country and whatever was associated with it. On the individual plane they were, indeed, very sensitive and would not brook being slighted in the least degree, but they saw nothing wrong in seeking monetary help quite frequently. This habit seemed to be fairly widespred among the office-going class, men who had regular incomes and lived in towns. They always seemed to be short of money, so that once the money loaned them was returned one should be prepared to receive a further request. There were, however, exceptional transactions and honourable men at

higher levels. It seemed, moreover, there was for these people no moral element involved in this matter, since they considered difference in income incompatible with the sense of communal well-being that is the essence of tribal life. Foreigners were, in any case, a necessary evil and their long purses should justifiably stand a pinch or two.

The British in the north introduced reforms in administration and established schools. In the Italian south, modern schools did not make their appearance before the present century had advanced much. On the eve of independence in 1960 there were some Italian and Egyptian schools. Later educational effort was sped up, so that the number of government schools had sharply increased in 1966, both in the capital and in the districts. There were vocational schools also. The educational system, however, presented a confused picture in that there were, in the main, three disparate elements in it. The government, the Italian, and the Egyptian schools were functioning simultaneously. A vigourous attempt, with the help of UNESCO, was undertaken with a view of producing an unified system in respect of syllabi and examinations. After the high school stage, the only facility available in the country was a four-year course of instruction in a number of disciplines, mainly social sciences and law, which was offered at the Italian institute, financed and drawn up by the Italian government. The institute granted diplomas to its alumni. For a further spell of education and obtaining a university degree, the diploma holders proceeded to a university in Italy, and as Somalia was a newly sovereign nation, as we shall see later, assistance from foreign countries began to pour in in various forms. One of them was the offer of free postsecondary education for Somali nationals. This had been going on for a number of years,

with the result that there were in late sixties over five hundred young persons at various European, American, and other universities. They were at Indian universities also, though in very small numbers. Their number in Egypt was quite large, as it always has been. In addition to social sciences and law, Somalis trained in medicine, commerce, agriculture, and public administration. This arrangement was, however, not an unmixed blessing, for it added yet another discordant element to the educational system, which was far from being unified or coherent. There were economists, for instance, from Yale, Moscow, and Cairo. I worked for quite some time with one from Yale and another from Cairo. What an experience in contrast it was. I met an economist trained at the Moscow University at an interview where this young man, who was seeking a job, gave an account of his academic achievements. He had spent several years in Moscow and evidently studied a wide range of advanced technical subjects.

Comparisons are invidious, but in terms of the utility to the country of this new labour force speaking, apart from Somali, different languages and equipped with minds sometimes very differently trained, there was logic in the lament of the Education Ministry over this diversity. They wanted to remedy this situation by establishing a university of their own. Several other advantages were claimed for this step. A high-power team from UNESCO had recommended some years earlier that this be done and indicated the lines on which the government should proceed, but no worthwhile action had been taken and now the proposition was taken up in all seriousness. The government appointed a committee of experts and officers of Ministries. The UNDP and ILO were represented, and

so was the American Teachers Training Institute. A comprehensive report was prepared, in which task I made some contributions, the major share of the work being that of another Indian who was working for the ILO (I represented UNDP). The main recommendations were that the structure should be built on solid foundations so far, among other things, as the independence of the university and the recruitment of teachers were concerned. Equally important was the view put forth strongly that the two official languages, English and Italian, should cease to coexist. English was recommended to be the language of instruction, for which reasons were given. Nothing much was heard about the fate of the report during the last two years of my stay in the country. One of the reasons for this perhaps was the radical change that occurred in the political setup of the country in October 1969.

Reverting to the people's traits, they were intelligent, quick in understanding things, and quite cooperative in working out new methods that might be introduced in some fields of administration. But hard work, that is, sustained work for a period of six hours at a stretch, was a rare sight in offices. Most of the chairs would be without their occupants for quite some time. Punctuality and regularity of attendance were conspicuously absent. While this type of looseness of conduct was quite general, the drivers of government cars were real pacesetters. The Italians, it was said, had given to the public servant the facility of free transport. Public officials were transported at public expenses to their place of work. This inheritance has been preserved. In many cases cars went round and the drivers were their own masters.

The British had recruited Indians to work at key jobs in their part of the country, which was known as British Somaliland. After the two parts merged in 1960, many of

these expatriates were moved south to work in various ministries, so that an expatriate came to be the lynchpin in every ministry. There were some remnants of the Italian regime, too, in the form of Italian advisors. As was perhaps natural, on power passing into Somali hands public offices came to be filled by men without much regard being paid to the quality of the personnel appointed or even to the requirements of the government. This resulted in a surfeit of staff in almost all public offices and the inadequacy of most men for their jobs, so that on my assuming duty one of the important problems that the UNDP took in hand was how to reduce the size of the establishment on the government payroll and, what is more, lay down norms of qualifications for all posts and in reference to them evaluate existing personnel with a view thereby to weeding out persons found to be substandard. A commission was working on this subject. I was requested to help the commission in its work on a part-time basis. Besides considering this incompatible with my main duties, I realised not only the enormity of the task the commission had taken in hand, but also the difficulties of finding an enforceable solution, because it was evident that most of the heads would have to roll. I was spared the inconvenience eventually. The commission ceased to function after some time, and the problem continued as it was.

I was designated as financial administration and budget expert. Another officer had the same assignment, though he was deemed senior to me, and there was a third member of the team whose field of work was government accounting. The team had been formed to look into the existing financial system of the government and propose measures for its all-round improvement. Every technical assistance expert receives from headquarters a job description to which he is expected to adhere. Due to some odd

administrative quirk I never received mine. The senior member and the accounting expert had theirs. The accounting field being fairly specific, the two of us were left with one job description and the need to develop our own appreciation of the assignment in respect to the existing structure of budget and system of financial control. This was, however, not to be an easy task.

Administrative practices, again perhaps a legacy from Italian times, were archaic. Record keeping had begun, though very haphazardly. Business rules governing disposal of business in the government as a whole and within a ministry and cabinet did not exist. Rules and procedures were neither elaborate nor well established. Verbal orders were the common mode of transmitting a decision. The system was, in a manner of speaking, the exact opposite of our way of doing things. There were no notes recorded in a file, as a matter of practice, nor any decisions recorded. Only a copy of an order issued was placed on file. As a result, accountability and continuity in the administrative process were clear casualties. Coupled with loose discipline, the general tone and quality of work in public offices can be imagined.

Once I had familiarised myself somewhat with important features of the financial system and the quality of people around, it was obvious that the task before us was not easy and it had several facets. Factors that could inhibit progress of work, it occurred to me, outnumbered the advantages with which the team started. First among the latter was the existence of a spirit of teamwork among the members, principally between two of us dealing with budget and financial administration. For this much credit must go to the matured wisdom of my senior colleague, though I would not hesitate to give a pat on the back to myself in this regard. There were occasions when on

professional matters such as the allocation of work between us, sometimes on their very nature, including their relevance to effecting improvement in the financial system or other subjects, there could be a flare-up, but I always preferred the path of reconciliation to that of discord, and the policy paid rich dividends. Much of it was reciprocated, and I have pleasant feelings to record. My colleague once remarked rather wryly that the trouble was that I never got angry.

I had considerable difficulty, however, adjusting myself to the ways of the third member.

Besides the comradely atmosphere that prevailed among the team members for at least a large part of my stay in Somalia, there was the highly sympathetic and appreciative interest shown in my work by the Finance Ministry. Each of the four directors general with whom I worked was cooperative and showed patient understanding of the recommendations I made. One of them was particularly kind. He went so far as to move his government to induct me into the executive hierarchy of the Finance Ministry. When the acting resident representative of the United Nations talked to me about this, I argued against the proposition, saying that the director general should always be a Somali, though a foreigner might, and I thought this was necessary in the interest of making our team's work of practical value to the government, become an assistant to him. Like this first director general, his successors in office did all they could to shore up my flagging spirits when difficulties were reported to them or when unpleasant situations were created for us by others in the ministry who, by virtue of their official position, were expected to be cooperative and enhance the prestige and value of our project.

There was a third advantage. The first resident representative of the United Nations with whom I worked was from Pakistan. He had in consultation with the local government fathered our project, as, indeed, he had a wide variety of other projects covering the entire development programme of the country. His competence in doing so, particularly in the field of finance, was of a high order. What is more, he was the leader of a large development team of over a hundred people belonging to various contries of the world from both East and West. He inspired confidence quite easily. He had the enviable qualities of an equable temperament and abundant courtesy. He was forward-looking, open-minded, and very cosmopolitan in his attitude. Besides, he never concealed his views on the progress or lack of it of projects from the concerned experts. His methods were open, and he kept in touch with his men and their work. All this made him a preeminent international servant. Most of the UN personnel here, irrespective of their nationality or colour of skin, did bear testimony to this fact when within two years of my arrival he left the country on transfer. He received, one might say, a hero's farewell.

Coming next to handicaps, there was, first, the basic weakness that seemed to me to be inherent in this system of technical assistance. The expert was on the periphery of the administrative setup. It was mainly by dint of tact and persuasion that he might be able to get the ordinary prerequisites for setting up an office. Similarly, even though he might have a specific topic on hand, he could do precious little unless he was aware of what was going on around him, in order to learn what was wrong and indeed to understand the true nature of the system he had been called upon to improve. By the very nature of his assignment he was not supposed to worry about this.

Second, the organisational setup, procedures, and methods of work and the quality of local associates constituted a major obstacle to reform. Though a mention of these features has been made above, a further elaboration will not be out of place. The main burden of song that the UN headquarters continually poured into the ears of its experts was: "What about your counterpart and when are you ending up?" This question seemed to reveal their colossal ignorance of local conditions. I was supposed to bring up the director of the Budget Department. He was officially considered my counterpart. A well-meaning young man, he had after high school received a stint of training in England. He thought he ought to be the permanent budget director—he was working in an officiating capacity—and even something higher. In fact, this feeling was universal among all people returning from foreign countries. They wanted to begin at the top, and many of them did. And as it was, I thought there was an air of sheer illiteracy about my counterpart. But despite the disagreement of his colleagues and his superiors with his self-evaluation, he continued to imagine he had nothing to learn. In fact, whether or not he was confused about the meaning of *counterpart*, he so much as remarked once that I was his "counterpart."

In the Budget Department there were only two foreigners, the two of us working for the United Nations, but in the other branches of the Ministry of Finance there were more foreigners: two Italian expatriates and one IMF expert on the tax system and one accounting expert working for the United Nations. There was, besides, the country representative of the IMF resident in Somalia. The presence of seven advisors in the ministry with one common aim, namely, to improve the financial system of the country, but without any properly thought out arrangement

whereby the activities of the UN group would be coordinated with the work of the IMF personnel and the Italians was obviously a case of over supply and there was bound to be duplication of work, besides other serious disadvantages. The Italians had been there for long years, having arrived in Somalia by virtue of their country's hegemony. After the independence of Somalia they chose to stay put, having developed vested interests of some sort. They were government employees and had come to learn how the financial system was working. They were certainly not interested or engaged in effecting change in it, which was an urgent necessity, but in preventing its collapse. One of them seemed to have all the secrets and was functioning in an esoteric fashion. As he was always secretive, albeit never losing his smile, it was never easy to know what he was doing. The IMF expert on taxes, owing allegiance to the resident representative other than the one who was our leader, chose the path of least resistance by just not doing a stroke of work, to the amusement of nobody except himself. This was a situation that could hardly be accepted. The senior budget expert's job description was vague in several respects, and considering also the designation of my post, it was evident that all the elements that constitute the financial system of a country fell within our sphere of duty. The system had to be taken as an organic whole and its various elements considered for improvement, keeping in view the final shape of the system that we wanted to produce.

The resident representative of the UNDP did not take long in realising the gravity of this problem, and he tendered his advice to the government in the matter through a comprehensive memorandum on this subject. Twenty-four items were listed, pertaining, among other things, to the budget, its restructuring, financial control, accounting

and expenditure reporting, and management of the fiscal and monetary problems of the government. View was taken of the presence of seven financial advisors in the Finance Ministry and an arrangement was devised whereby the individual experts, while functioning in the fields specifically assigned to them, were to mutually coordinate their work so as to avoid overlapping. Regular meetings were made obligatory. The senior member of our team, my senior colleague, was for the purpose of implementing the new scheme of things to be leader of the entire group of seven. He was to keep the resident representative informed of the progress of the scheme. The memorandum issued as a government order not only tried to forge interexpert links and thereby remove a serious difficulty facing the UN experts, but it also removed the lacunae that existed in the directives under which we were functioning. Out tasks were made clear and specific. The UN headquarters was informed of this important development. It speaks eloquently to their apathy and faulty methods of field management that there was no knowing whether this far-reaching description of our duties was accepted by them. Perhaps not, for while we made this memorandum our frame of reference, mentioning this fact in our reports, they kept asking not how much of the job as detailed in the memorandum was done, but when the "project" was going to be finished.

The transfer of our resident representative proved to be an unfortunate event for the project. His successor, an elderly Canadian gentleman, took some time to get acquainted with the various field programmes, the men in charge, and the leading figures in government and the administration. As a man and in his ways he offered a clear contrast to his predecessor. Not much was known about his professional and academic achievements,

though it was stated that he was rated highly by the top brass in the UNDP headquarters and had come to Somalia from some community development programme that he had run. After a brief courtesy meeting, the only official contact I had with him for over a year was through a letter of appreciation that he wrote to me on one of my periodical reports. Occasionally also, we exchanged small talk at social gatherings. It was at one such party that he threw out a remark while talking to me that he thought it was necessary to make a review of the entire development programme inherited by him. Innocuous though the statement was, it occurred to me that continuity, important for the success of the development plan, might suffer if projects were interfered with in this manner and not allowed to run their full course. There would, of course, be good reason to stop projects found on competent examination to be wrongly conceived or making no progress, but it would indeed be ominous if successive resident representatives showed little respect for well-considered programmes of their predecessors. There was danger of this happening because even good plans carry a superfluous element and a newcomer in reformist zeal might feel tempted to throw away the baby with the tub water.

There were other unfavourable factors working in the same direction. There was a new government, so that not only was the UN representative gone who had helped and advised on the formulation of projects, but also the political leaders of the country who had received and accepted the advice were gone. The old order of things, besides, changed substantially in various respects. There was no fraternisation, such as we had known before, between the leader and the UN personnel. Gone was also the old openness of the managerial practices of the leader.

There was an iron curtain separating the new UN representative from most of the experts. It was not long before we learnt that there was a kind of cabal working behind the curtain, composed almost wholly of men with the same pigmentation as the leader himself possessed. There was of course an Asian in its midst, cantankerous and reportedly able, but apparently unable to get on with people, a difficulty that had cost him one job in Somalia. He was redeemed by the previous resident representative. But now he had offered his unique talents to this new group.

As if this were not enough, a new IMF country representative appeared on the scene, a strapping young Dutchman who lost little time in making it known that he was not of the ordinary kind. Unlike his predecessor, who, though not one of the enlarged experts team organised by the previous UNDP's local boss, did discuss problems occasionally with some of us, and he functioned within the Finance Ministry, which was no mean advantage to our group. The newcomer designated himself as the financial advisor to the prime minister. There was no hurry to object to this, as our group of six working in the ministry under the supposed leadership of the senior UNDP expert disintegrated, it seemed, even before it had found ground under its feet. The whole picture became bizarre, and its consequences soon became obvious. For now, the prime minister had, on a de facto basis his financial advisor and the three of us (the UN experts) advising the Finance Ministry. The Italians who had only superfically entered our large group retreated into their shells. Neither troublesome nor helpful, they compensated for their exit from our company by their smiles, which never lost their warmth. The new resident representative (UNDP), who was supposed to inherit the leadership of the enlarged

team, had his cabal to advise him on our and other projects. Nobody could bring any semblance of order into the new situation, and no one lamented this more than our new budget director, (who had taken over from the highly self-conscious officiating director mentioned earlier), a straight-forward young Somali with a master's degree in economics from Yale to his credit.

The way the administration functioned was rather odd. It seemed all authority was vested in the prime minister. This was not stated in any kind of rules passed under some law but was simply the practice in vogue. Nor was it necessary for new expenditures to be first examined and commented upon by the Finance Ministry. This was a basic weakness in the financial system, and I brought to bear upon it all the influence I could muster to remove it. It all began with a chance meeting I had with one of the more able director generals. He came to see me to mention a few casual matters, one of which was his complaint that the Finance Ministry was slothful. When I stated that the ministry was lacking in teeth because it had no status in the framework of the government he was shocked to hear this. The Finance Ministry's function, according to him, was, and he meant to imply that this was the view of the government, to register demands for money received from various ministries and to provide the same. It was now my turn to be stunned, because he was a top functionary of the government in charge of the entire establishment and reasonably competent. The director general stayed for an hour to hear me patiently describe what I thought to be the role of the ministry in the government. He did not demur but said this was completely new to him and should be brought to the notice of the government. Along with a few other subjects it became my chief concern to achieve some success in this regard. But more of this later.

With the help of the new budget director we concentrated on a few fundamental matters, like the structure of the budget and the reorganisation of the Budget Department and a number of ancillary matters pertinent to the question of giving to the Finance Ministry effective say in the financial management of the state. In some matters, like change in budgetary classification and the overall presentation of the budget, including its linkage with the development plan, the ministry acted on its own, making use of the privilege it has of calling budget proposals for the new financial year, and a very large measure of success was achieved. For all the rest, whatever far-reaching improvements were proposed by us and accepted by the ministry, nothing could be put into effect because the ministry dare not move on its own and such recommendations as were made to the prime minister never evoked a response, positive or negative. For a long time I felt as if we had got dead stuck against a blind alley. Such in reality it was, and I was overwhelmed by a feeling of utter helplessness and complete dissatisfaction with my job. I had reason to believe that there were scores of experts around who were in a similar, if not worse, position. I was advised by some of them to take things in my stride and not take too moral a view of the situation. Perhaps they were right, but I was not as sorry for myself as I was for the people we were expected to help. There was so much to do, yet we were thwarted in our earnest efforts. I sought to analyse the situation with a view to finding out what actually was responsible for our difficulties.

The UNDP, IMF, WHO, FAO, UNESCO, and last to enter the field, UNIDO, are all offspring of the UN organisation, instituted to help in the development of third world countries. Except for UNDP, these bodies have special and exclusive fields of work. The range of the activities of the

former is wide and quite extensive. There are, as a result, virtually autonomous organisations in a country, each dealing with a segment of development. Obviously, it would lead to far better results if they all, while retaining their individual identities, functioned locally under one superauthority, with effective control over them. There was no such leadership. The UNDP resident representative's control over various organisations, besides his own, was in practice either absent or tenuous at best, and one could see how much friction prevailed. But for us what was of greater moment was, as mentioned earlier, the anomaly stemming from the fact that like most other developmental activities, our field of work fell within the domain of two bodies, the UNDP and the IMF. This was our external handicap, so to speak, directly attributable to the progenitor of the programme, the United Nations. We had our internal difficulties, which were related, in no uncertain terms, to the vacuum created by the transfer of the initiator of the project, the previous resident representative. In terms of those qualities of leadership that we and other international experts had come to admire in him, the vacuum was inadequately filled.

It was in early 1969 that the IMF country resident representative was overtly committing encroachment on our work. News about the special status that he was claiming vis-à-vis every other financial expert, foreign or local, had acquired some authenticity, much to the chagrin of the senior local officers of the ministry. In principle, the UNDP representative, as leader of the team of his experts, is the liaison officer between them and the government. Keenly sensible as we were of inadequacies in the functioning of the government as manifested, among other things, in the inability of the ministry to put into effect any worthwhile measure of reform, however avidly they

might cherish it, without the approval of the prime minister, we decided at long last to seek the assistance of our putative leader to bring about a meeting between us and the prime minister, who was in our view the fountainhead of power in the government. We met the resident representative and bared before him the reasons that had led us to ask for the meeting. Much was his commiseration with us, as he said, "You have been wronged," and promised to take us to the prime minister. Before that he wanted us to reduce our woes to writing. Notes were prepared in the form of comprehensive and authenticated memoranda and shown first to the director general of our ministry, who expressed in writing his concurrence with our views and then forwarded them to the resident representative. Copies were mailed to the UN headquarters in New York. The purport of our submission was to explain elaborately the blocks in our way in polite and diplomatic parlance as befitted our status as international servants.

We hoped that if the much longed for meeting with the chief executive, the prime minister, came off as promised by our leader, we would be able to fill in the blanks if necessary and easily carry conviction. The result was quite the contrary. The resident representative never informed us about what befell our report and his promise, but to be sure, he acted, by advising the government that they constitute a number of committees on various topical matters like taxation, debt management, budgeting, etc. My senior colleague was absent on leave in India, and I was sick at home. With our memoranda fresh in his mind, the resident representative took care to see—as the director general later hinted—that neither of us appeared in any committee.

The ministry later issued a statement rectifying the omission and appointing me to one of the more important

former is wide and quite extensive. There are, as a result, virtually autonomous organisations in a country, each dealing with a segment of development. Obviously, it would lead to far better results if they all, while retaining their individual identities, functioned locally under one superauthority, with effective control over them. There was no such leadership. The UNDP resident representative's control over various organisations, besides his own, was in practice either absent or tenuous at best, and one could see how much friction prevailed. But for us what was of greater moment was, as mentioned earlier, the anomaly stemming from the fact that like most other developmental activities, our field of work fell within the domain of two bodies, the UNDP and the IMF. This was our external handicap, so to speak, directly attributable to the progenitor of the programme, the United Nations. We had our internal difficulties, which were related, in no uncertain terms, to the vacuum created by the transfer of the initiator of the project, the previous resident representative. In terms of those qualities of leadership that we and other international experts had come to admire in him, the vacuum was inadequately filled.

It was in early 1969 that the IMF country resident representative was overtly committing encroachment on our work. News about the special status that he was claiming vis-à-vis every other financial expert, foreign or local, had acquired some authenticity, much to the chagrin of the senior local officers of the ministry. In principle, the UNDP representative, as leader of the team of his experts, is the liaison officer between them and the government. Keenly sensible as we were of inadequacies in the functioning of the government as manifested, among other things, in the inability of the ministry to put into effect any worthwhile measure of reform, however avidly they

might cherish it, without the approval of the prime minister, we decided at long last to seek the assistance of our putative leader to bring about a meeting between us and the prime minister, who was in our view the fountainhead of power in the government. We met the resident representative and bared before him the reasons that had led us to ask for the meeting. Much was his commiseration with us, as he said, "You have been wronged," and promised to take us to the prime minister. Before that he wanted us to reduce our woes to writing. Notes were prepared in the form of comprehensive and authenticated memoranda and shown first to the director general of our ministry, who expressed in writing his concurrence with our views and then forwarded them to the resident representative. Copies were mailed to the UN headquarters in New York. The purport of our submission was to explain elaborately the blocks in our way in polite and diplomatic parlance as befitted our status as international servants.

We hoped that if the much longed for meeting with the chief executive, the prime minister, came off as promised by our leader, we would be able to fill in the blanks if necessary and easily carry conviction. The result was quite the contrary. The resident representative never informed us about what befell our report and his promise, but to be sure, he acted, by advising the government that they constitute a number of committees on various topical matters like taxation, debt management, budgeting, etc. My senior colleague was absent on leave in India, and I was sick at home. With our memoranda fresh in his mind, the resident representative took care to see—as the director general later hinted—that neither of us appeared in any committee.

The ministry later issued a statement rectifying the omission and appointing me to one of the more important

committees. It went out of its way, indeed, to mention that my personal contribution towards budgetary reform and other improvements in financial management stood out. Quite as expected, of the several committees appointed, our committee took our assignment far more seriously than the rest, barring one. The committee was chaired by the governor of the Somali National Bank and had the country representative of the IMF, the self-proclaimed financial advisor to the prime minister mentioned above, as one of its members, whose presence acted as a spur for me, and I was able to explain convincingly and at length the difficulties of the ministry and, therefore, of the experts in moving forward in respect to reform and improvement. As far as possible, I lost no opportunity in apportioning the blame for the absence of harmonious relations among the various experts. The report of the committee was brief but helpful to the work of UNDP personnel, though it did not touch upon basic issues like the lack of coordination among them, the Italians, and the IMF expert. Nor did it discuss the urgent need for the devolution of legitimate power to the Finance Ministry. Despite warm reference in the report to the work of the Budget Department, which boosted my morale, we appeared to be back at square one. It was obvious that there would be no satisfactory progress unless matters I considered vital were first decided.

The situation seemed to be the result of historical factors and of an inexperienced and ineffectual government with no organised public service worth the name. The major international organisation, the UNDP, with over a hundred experts and large funds at its command, could make use of its resources and status to delve deep into this basic malaise, for only then could tangible results in development be expected. This was based on what my

over three years' experience led me to believe in regard to the entire gamut of the development process that was under way. But the UNDP's house was, in my reckoning, as much divided against itself as was the government's. The resident representative took counsel with his cabal and would not talk to us and others, as he was bound to, each expert being his only advisor in his respective field. The prime minister wanted to concentrate all power in his own hands, reducing ministries to the status of dummies. At least the Finance Ministry actually was one. In fact, after the prime minister's removal from office in 1969 the new finance secretary (as the finance minister was now called) confirmed this impression by volunteering the statement that the prime minister had told him that it was his wish to administer the country all by himself, perhaps with the help of special assistants, much as "President Kennedy used to do." The prime minister did, however, discuss matters with the resident representative of UNDP, and both, according to their individual interests and predilections, ruled the roost.

The saddest aspect of the episode was the complete blackout by our head office in New York of this momentous development in the implementation of our project, on which so much money had been spent. They never so much as mentioned in their correspondence with us the memorandum we had sent to them, much less take appropriate action on it. It has been the experience of old hands in the UN service in the field that the headquarters is anxious that no sleeping dog should be awakened and that expert lasts who keeps on the right side of everybody in the field, no matter what other achievement he does or does not register on his assignment. No wonder that among the large number of experts one came across people whose only concern in regard to their project arose when

they sat down to compose their periodical report. Then they did not know what to write.

This was not all. However much one may deplore the fact, but it is true, not all Western experts, in fact very few of them, bring to bear upon their work an attitude of lofty idealism and give of their best. There is even lingering in some of them a streak of the old feeling that they are called upon when working in the field to carry a burden to uplift the backward people. Arrogance is, however, matched by ignorance of the deep feelings of distrust that these "backward people" have towards them. While Somalis at this time generally would like to do without foreigners altogether, the educated among them made no secret of their preferences. One of them, a sophisticated man of high status, once confided in me how he had tried to advance an Indian's interests over the heads of some white individuals. The Somali gentleman was close to Italians and quite familiar with their language and ways. On another occasion, at a large meeting where senior officers were present after one of us from the UNDP team presented a proposition relating to some development problem the Somali officers were apparently impressed, including the chairman, who rose to express his agreement and added, "That is why Asians make good experts." It was not perhaps proficiency so much as the general attitude of the expert that mattered to these people.

Some of the experts from the West were particularly hard-nosed vestiges of the old imperial order. One of them, an old gentleman, once expressed the wish that the three Indians working in the Finance Ministry be transferred to the Somali Institute of Public Administration, which was wholly manned by Pakistanis, for then, according to him, the place would be another "Rann of Kutch" (a reference to one of the clashes between Indian

and Pakistani forces in the fifties). Malicious indeed. Much later, after a meeting he and I had with the finance secretary (minister), this elderly man walked into my room and I enquired whether he would mind having some coffee. "Yes, of course, now that we have walked into civilisation," he said. I was not flattered but felt almost cut. Along with coffee I offered to him what certainly was a dressing down, for I knew the man who had taken our meeting had come to his new office from a private enterprise of which he was the director-owner. The business was flourishing and the man, having a good professional background—he had been for some time, director of one Budget Department in the past, which post he had resigned—was dynamic and full of ideas. He had come to his new job in the wake of the change in the political system of the country, hoping, as he told us, that opportunity might come his way to move things faster and towards good results. For all these articulate Somalis, highly sensitive and intelligent, were burning with a desire to achieve great things. It is lack of sympathy with these aspirations and of appreciation of the new reality that I was convinced made a man of this category to which my guest belonged quite unsuitable for service in underdeveloped areas of the world. And this gentleman was the chief member of the cabal and closest to the leader of UNDP in Somalia. The leader himself was not perhaps free from a feeling that some classes of people enjoyed richer natural endowments than others. Some uncharitable people went so far as to hold the view that according to him (the leader) men and women of the Anglo-Saxon race alone were worthy of respect.

One evening in mid-October 1969 I was having my daily walk. A car stopped by my side and a colleague—another foreign expert—stepped out and accosted me. He

said briefly that the president of the republic had been assassinated. I hurried back home. There was not much stir about, and for the next few days we were advised not to leave our homes. When we did, it was a new world we encountered. There had been a coup, and the military had taken over. There was apparent calm in the city. Neither the assassination nor the disappearance of the democratic setup had produced any noticeable reaction among the educated, much less in others. Corrupt practices had been reported to be pervasive, so that foreigners came to hear about them. In administration the existence of corruption in high places was sought to be justified on the ground that very large sums spent for entry into these places through election had to be made good.

Under the new dispensation I spent about two and a half years in Somalia. These were years of relative peace for me. I missed the wise counsel of my senior colleague, who chose to fold up his tents and return home. There was adequate compensation, however, in an unusual form. The new regime did not take long to set their house in order. A Supreme Revolutionary Council became the apex organ of government, embodying in itself all powers legislative and administrative. The ministries were placed under state secretaries. Into these latter posts select persons with known ability were pitchforked. As mentioned earlier, the finance portfolio became the charge of an experienced person with professional and business acumen. He seemed to be brimming with plans and a passion for producing results. The Planning Ministry was placed under a young former civil servant. An economist trained at Manchester, he had been director of the Planning Department under the old government. I had on several occasions discussed with him matters common to fields of finance and planning and in his company debated a

controversial proposition regarding marketing of livestock—a major source of the country's income—with the former prime minister. I and others were pleading against the latter's decision on the subject, which had the strong support of some powerful sections in the trade. I learnt later that I was giving voice to the sentiments of many, including the then director of the Planning Department. Our view prevailed. The dynamic finance secretary wore out his welcome much too soon at the ministry and was replaced by the budget director, the economist from Yale with whom I had worked more closely than with any other local functionary. With these two secretaries at the helm of affairs in fields in which my work lay I could have asked for no better luck.

Our suspicion that the young IMF boss was undercutting the UNDP team by virtue of his access to the then prime minister, whose financial advisor he said he had become, proved to be well founded soon after the revolution when, one morning, a middle-aged Scotsman of gracious mien entered my room when my senior colleague was also present. He produced his visiting card, which bore a designation almost identical to that of either of us, with the additional letters "IMF" at the end. This evidently was going to make the confusion worse. But what galled us quite a bit was that we should have been in the dark about this important development altogether, because the overlapping and duplication of functions that this addition to our ranks would worsen was what we had been protesting all along. The senior officers of the ministry were equally unaware of this matter. The minister at the time was absent in Rome, where he had gone on official business, the revolution having come between him and his intentions to return home. The new secretary of state had his own tale to recount. He told us he was not surprised

that this had happened, because the ousted premier while persuading him to become one of his special assistants had confided in him that he intended appointing Englishmen to all major executive positions in the ministry. Now that the IMF officer had come, he said, he could do nothing about it, but he caused us no small amazement when he announced that one of the first actions he took after coming to the ministry was to have the young IMF country representative immediately recalled. The reasons he gave were rather specious. Within days of this, the announcement of a farewell party for the young man showed how eager the secretary was to have him removed. At the party when the new IMF boss—he was a German—was introduced to me in the presence of the person he had come to replace I told him I hoped he would take more kindly to us than the latter had. The guffaw that followed did not conceal the fact that on both of them the sarcasm of the point I wanted to make was registered, perhaps on the outgoing gentleman more than on the newcomer.

The induction of one more expert in the ministry was evidently not in the interest of better financial management. It was not known whether the UNDP authorities in Somalia were aware of the activities of the IMF country representative in this regard. I would consider it a safe guess that the former had knowledge of this development. The leader of UNDP may have learnt about it from the prime minister, whose confidence he seemed to enjoy. Vaguely, however, he mentioned at one time that he was not aware of the job description of the newly arrived IMF expert. Whether he had overtly blessed his IMF (that is the country representative of IMF's) counterpart's activities in undermining the prestige of the UNDP project, a circumstance that would be reprehensible in itself, or not, he had

by this time completely lost my confidence in his sense of impartiality and fair judgement.

The removal of the IMF country representative was only the first of a number of such actions that the revolutionary council took. The central figure of the inner council of the UNDP resident representative—the cabal mentioned earlier—disappeared one day as it were, so surreptitious was his exit. His secretary even was said to be in the dark about it. Others followed him, the resident representative himself being the last to leave the country. Such sudden departures, made allegedly under compulsion of political events, receive ample sympathy and compensation at the hands of the United Nations. Such men are even provided with comfortable berths elsewhere. I viewed these unusual transfers as confirmation of my belief that when men bring to bear upon their work an attitude of arrogance and create an atmosphere of standoffishness and cliquism, however well intentioned and able they may otherwise be—in several cases even this was questionable—the people who are sought to be uplifted react to them very adversely, as they suspect the new missionaries to be relics of a colonial past they thought they had left behind. Some of the young Somalis in positions of power volunteered comments far more harsh and sour than mine.

That brought to an end for me a period of tribulation. The newly arrived IMF officer (the German gentleman) turned out to be suave and forthcoming. Apart from his professional competence, he believed in the efficacy of good public relations, and we hit it off well on the whole. With the former budget director now in the saddle as finance secretary, I was able to achieve substantial results in the spheres of budgetary reform and some other areas of financial administration.

In December 1970 I was convalescing in New York after an operation. With no particular object in view I contacted the administration section of our programme at the UN secretariat. I was requested to pay a visit to them, as they had a matter in hand they would like to talk over with me. I went. It is not easy ordinarily to find one's way to the appropriate desk in this organisation. Nor had I ever understood which section or sections were responsible for monitoring the progress of our project, advancing its interest, or trying to terminate it. I was, however, able to reach the cubicle where the officer who had talked to me earlier had his office. I had a question or two to ask in regard to my sick leave, which were satisfactorily answered. There is nothing in my experience to compare with the interest and thoroughness with which matters relating to, among other things, salary and allowances and leave entitlement of field staff are treated by the UN headquarters. But that is all that is positive about the nexus of the headquarters with the field staff. I was told that I was expected to call on another officer in a different branch. I proceeded to locate the room and the officer, which I did after some time and effort. This officer, an African, said he was deputising for another officer who was responsible for Africa. After some talk I learnt the purpose for which the officer had requested my presence. It was to help him in "unravelling the mysteries" of our project in Somalia; what was it all about? He had before him a paper that contained official notes that would, he feared, lead to our project's termination after only six months, whereas the government of the country (Somalia) or some other corner in the headquarters wanted it to last another year. So may it be. It was not a matter of much significance to me. After all, the headquarters and the government of the country had been engaged in a seesaw struggle for over four years,

the former wanting the project to come to an early end, the latter trying to bolster it for a while longer. Shuffling through papers, glancing at some, the officer seemed to have something on his mind. He wanted to resolve his doubts. Almost soliloquizing, he referred to some commendatory comments on my work, which seemed to pop up as he was going through the papers, but he would not tell me who exactly had said what. It occurred to me that after about five years of work here perhaps was to be found the source of much that was wrong with the conception and the execution of the development programmes. Major determinants of the programme as a whole are the priorities that, given the finances available, a government assigns to a variety of projects that constitute a programme. Thus the individual projects their costs; their targets and life span are known. The execution should, consequently, be a matter for the field experts and the technical organs at the headquarters, the resident representative being a liaison between the former and the government, besides giving the headquarters an overall view of the progress of the programmes and an appreciation of the environment, political and social, in which the programmes were being carried out. This may theoretically be the position, but the reality is different. The autonomy of the project and the expert simply do not exist. Everything revolves round the resident representative. Even the government plays a minor role.

My friend at the Africa desk finally asked me what everybody had been asking all these years: what about the progress of the project? It was as if he touched something sensitive in me. I told him, without emotion, all that had been simmering in me, the failure of the policy of remote control, the helplessness of the experts, the lack of practical interest in projects on the part of everybody concerned,

and so on. My analysis was impressive, but more than that, coming from Africa, he seemed to appreciate the relevance of it all. I strained myself (having undergone surgery recently), but the officer wanted to listen, so that finally he generously observed, "I have missed my midday prayers, but I have learnt much. It would be in the interest of the project to request you see my boss." I did not plead complete indifference to the future of the project but refused to oblige him. He did, however, persuade me to see an Indian colleague of his, with whom I had a casual talk. I received much courtesy from the latter. On my return to Somalia, I learnt that the project was extended for six months, which was eventually extended to twelve, i.e., up to the end of 1971.

Even though my experience was limited to one project and one country, I have no doubt, considering the length of my service in the field, that one of the most urgent needs of the UNDP is to make sure the project with its various features, like work content and life span, is precisely laid down, and the experts become the hub of the entire process and deliver them from the existing situation, which is bad for their morale because they are subjected to operation of a variety of uncertainties and unwholesome factors. The relationship between them and the headquarters should be much closer so that there is supervision of their work and a greater readiness on the part of headquarters to render them assistance through visits of technical and other officers. It goes also without saying that there has to be a central authority, which should be designated to centralise the activities of various donor countries and international development agencies, so far as their impact on the country's development is concerned, so that duplication of human effort and capital

investment is avoided and available international resources are put to optimum economic use.

While in Somalia, I did look at developments that were occurring on the African continent, which seemed to be waking up from its long slumber. There were as many as forty nation-states that were yet in a state of infancy, but already, as in Somalia, there was evidence that they were not going to allow their social and political problems to push into the background the overriding need to initiate a process of economic development. With the help of available literature and occasional visits to three neighbouring countries of Somalia—Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Yemen—I formulated some thoughts about the continent as a whole.

Chapter IX
Some Thoughts on Economic Development in Africa

The 1960s may be said to be the period when the emerging countries of Africa began to devise projects and schemes for national development. Whether these efforts took the shape of national plans in all forty countries is a matter about which there is not adequate information. The projects appear to have come before the plan, as a result of the UN activities and programmes of development or those of the bilateral technical aid agreement between countries. Some countries that devised plans produced broad frameworks indicating directions in which development could be attempted, estimates of costs, both real and financial, being more speculative than based on a breakdown of various elements. Similarly, availability of finances, whether national or external, was not calculated with any measure of thoroughness. Consequently, one may see in actual practice complete divergence between the national plan and the national budget. This has caused setbacks to many development projects. Plan formulation, at least in some of these countries, is rudimentary. A plan is only a compendium of projects. Some of the adverse results of this will be discussed.

What have been the results so far of development after independence of Africa came into existence, in terms

of improvement in the general economic condition? There are a few salient features that should be noted before we attempt an answer to this question.

The continent is vast, but it is broken into a large number of independent states whose populations are small. Nigeria is the biggest, with over 100 million people. Countries like Liberia and Mauritania have 1.5 and 1 million persons respectively. Largely, the climate is tropical, with large variations in the amount of rainfall and quality of the soil. Tribalism is almost universal, though it is said to be weak in some countries like Ghana and strong in Tanganyika, now part of Tanzania. Settled populations are small. Cultivation of land, therefore, is not a very important activity in many countries where even a beginning has not been made with surveys and recording of land rights. Livestock raising is an important economic activity in several countries. Mineral resources are said to exist; so are water resources. On the western coast the population is much more homogenous than it is in East Africa. In the former there were no settlers, at least in substantial numbers, as there were on the eastern coast. This has not been without effects of a mixed nature. The settlers developed the country acquiring a far-reaching vested interest in it. They either acquired political power, to the great sorrow of the majority of the people, as in South Africa, and when they failed to gain it, as in Kenya, development received a serious setback. Capital and skilled labour began to leave that country.

While most of these countries depend on the export of their primary products, like cocoa, coffee, cotton, minerals, and livestock, for importing manufactured goods, they do not, by and large, depend so much as countries in Asia do on foreign food imports. Land is abundant in relation to population, and it is obvious that for development this a source of much strength. There is no doubt,

however, that changes in international prices of exports like coffee and cocoa affect their balance of payments severely, and for all of them economic development depends on a favourable balance-of-payments position.

In assessing the achievements made so far and indicating in what direction greater effort should be devoted one might state the factors that are a serious constraint on development. These are (i) backwardness in education and dearth of skilled personnel; (ii) lack of good means of transportation and communication; (iii) inadequate administrative organisation; (iv) weak financial administration and meagre local financial resources for development; and (v) the small size of the nation-states.

Backwardness in Education and Dearth of Skilled Personnel

The effects of this inhibiting factor are very serious, and one should think this deficiency is a much more serious obstacle in African countries than it is, say, in India, though the percentage of illiteracy in India is also very high. One finds evidence of this in all spheres of life of the community, be it a government office, a business establishment, or a school. All skills are scarce and the wages paid are very high in relation to output. This makes the cost of all activity very high indeed.

Lack of Good Means of Transportation and Communication

One cannot get into the interior of several African countries easily. This may not be surprising, but it is equally strenuous to go from one town to another by road.

Between certain countries no land route system is in existence. Civil aviation routes have become available within and between countries and have done much to stimulate internal and external traffic. Not many African countries have internal railway lines. Internally, many towns are connected by telephone. The external service, though sometimes available, needs considerable strengthening.

Inadequate Administrative Organisation

It would be fair to consider this as deficiency number one in an African country. Systematic work in accordance with rules and procedures sometimes gives rise to bureaucratic methods of government that become too time-consuming and destructive of initiative. This has happened most significantly in India, and the solution, if found, has not, apparently, shown results. The condition in some African countries is exactly the opposite. There is little organisation and no system of work. This serious situation, as, indeed, it is, is attributable, in some measure, to the colonial system of government in these countries. The British as masters introduced method in their scheme of governance; so did, perhaps, the French. Others, and some of them lived for long years in some of these countries, believed in managing, it appears, through the tongue. Now that they have left, there are two important things to be done. First, a belief has to be created that some system or method is very necessary, and second, men must be found who will put it into effect. Both tasks are requirements of an urgent nature. Their connection with the implementation of projects is very close and can be appreciated only when one gets involved with public administration in one way or another in these countries.

Apart from stepping up educational effort, which, unfortunately, is not receiving the priority it deserves—its importance is as high as that of roads, for instance—on-the-job training is most essential. One peculiar feature of the development process in African countries is the dependence of most of them on foreigners who serve them either as expatriates paid for wholly by them or as advisors whose cost is mainly borne by the United Nations. Both types are costly but certainly very useful to the countries concerned. There can, however, be a hidden danger in this dependence. It can induce indolence. In other words, the assistants are in danger of being considered as enlargement of the complement of staff available to an administrative agency and not as instruments for training people.

Weak Financial Administration and Meagre Local Financial Resources for Development

Generally speaking, the budgets in many African nations are run on deficits. Expenditure control is inadequate. Project evaluation is not undertaken as a part of normal financial procedures no matter where the finances come from. Most of the programmes have to be financed with local resources at least partly. Since the budgets are in deficit, local costs cannot be met. Several projects have gone overboard as a result of this.

The Small Size of the Nation-States

Apart from the fact that inputs of various kinds, like capital and skilled personnel, would be too limited for such high-cost ventures as a multipurpose river valley

project, a railway line, or a highway, the size of the market, which plays a key role in industrial development, would be an arresting factor to development if remedial measures are not sought and used.

The economic and other characteristics of African countries have been discussed. We may now consider the action that has been taken so far by national governments and others to initiate the process of social and economic change in these countries. What has been the result and what possible lessons can be drawn for the future?

Mention has been made before of the various international agencies and foreign governments that are giving assistance in several ways to African states in development. The UNDP, FAO, WHO, and UNESCO have their programmes for these countries. The World Bank and its affiliates have similar programmes, all of which extend over a wide range of activities, like highway construction, agricultural development, and improvement of human resources through public health and educational projects. Bilateral agreements between these states and friendly foreign countries account for a good deal of developmental activity in these countries. As stated earlier, it is not possible to say whether all these activities are part of a coherent plan in every country. More about this later.

The developmental effort in Africa, which, generally speaking, began seriously in the early sixties, has undoubtedly produced an impact on economic conditions in the continent. The following figures indicate this, and the comparative data for other countries can help in identifying, after further study, factors that play a large role in the developmental process:

Less Developed Primary Goods Producing Countries, Annual Growth of Population and Real Domestic Product, by Regional Groupings (1960–1965)

Region	Population 1960 (millions)	Compound Real Products	Percentage Population Growth	Growth rates Per Capita Product
Southern Europe	86	7.6	1.5	6
Middle East	76	6.6	2.3	4
Far East	125	6.1	3.0	3
Central Africa	175	3.7	2.1	2
Mexico and Central America	58	5.3	3.0	2
South America	44	4.2	2.7	1
South Asia	593	3.3	2.2	Less than 1
North Africa	28	0.8	2.2	−1 to −7

Source: OECD, February 1967.

Countries Included in the Regions

Southern Europe: Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta, Spain, Turkey, and Yugoslavia.

Middle East: Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the UAR, Egypt, and Syria.

Far East: Cambodia, Republic of China, Korea, Malasia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Central Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rhodesia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and (as a group) Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, (Brazzaville), Dahomey, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Malagasy, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Upper Volta.

South Asia: Burma, Ceylon, India, and Pakistan.

North Africa: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. (Real product fell sharply in Algeria.)

The per capita product in Central Africa increased at the rate of 2 percent a year along with a population growth rate of 2.1 percent. Similarly, some of the other regions also showed an increase in population as great as or greater than in South Asia but a higher rate of increase in per capita product.

It is not easy to say, with any amount of certainty, how far this increase in real income in Africa was attributable to planned direction of the development process. Perhaps very little. *The United Nations Economic Survey of Africa* had the following to say about this (late 1965 or early 1966):

> Development plans, which began to acquire some importance with the accession of most of the countries to independence in the second half of the period (that is, early sixties), had little, if any, impact on the over-all economic development of the majority of these countries, and can at best be taken as an expression of the desires of Governments and of the hopes of small groups of experts. This small impact of planning on actual developments was due to a number of causes, such as the technical defects of most plans, the absence of appropriate instruments for plan implementation and, last but not least, unforeseen developments in foreign trade, or in domestic politics. It should be admitted, however, that one of the incidental benefits of these early plans has been that they provoked an awareness of economic problems, at least in the Government, but sometimes even in the larger public, and also induced a considerable amount of research work, particularly in the field of national accounting, to which this study is heavily indebted.

Consultation and Participation

Fixing our attention for a while on a smaller area of the continent to obtain a closer look at the problem, one can affirm, on the basis of experience, that there is very

little consultation or none at all with the people at large in the formulation of plans and none whatsoever in their implementation. The concept has to be defined. Consultation with and participation of the people in the process of plan making would imply that plans are made on the basis of knowledge of local requirements, potentialities, and resources and then coordinated with projects conceived on a national scale. Apart from some schemes outside the plan, to which people and government made contributions, by the very nature of the process as it has developed this does not happen. External agencies offer projects, some of which entail loans. Any "plan" that can grow out of such transactions will be a collection of projects, without having the refinments and attributes of an integrated plan. Nor need one bemoan this. In regions where settled communities are very limited in number, communications very undeveloped, and administrative and technical personnel woefully inadequate, it should be a satisfactory state of affairs if government participation takes place in an enlightened manner in this vital task. That is almost platitudinous. The truth of the matter is that politics, economics, and notions of national rights and aspirations have got strangely blended. The donors are many, but the beneficiary is organisationally and financially too weak to make optimal use of the assistance. He is not able to absorb usefully all that is available. What is essential, therefore, is to give a coherent shape to all assistance programmes, relate one to the other, and provide for their implementation a local financial and administrative base. Quite obviously this is something that governments have to do themselves. Any step that increases their competence in this respect will be highly rewarding.

There is reason to hold the view that even with all the difficulties we have been discussing, and many more, the African economic future is assured. Political stability will, of course, be a fundamental factor. Equally important will be, as we have said, the capacity of Africans to assume more and more responsibilities themselves and to devise measures for overcoming the handicaps in their path to development. Three institutions must be mentioned in this connection: (i) the African Development Bank in Abdijan (Ivory Coast); and (ii) the Institute of Economic Development in Dakar (Senegal); and (iii) the East African Community. In a fair measure these institutions should be able to help African countries, as much as any form of external assistance, to move forward. This is briefly explained below.

The African Development Bank

In his address to the shareholders at their second annual meeting in April 1966, the president of the African Development Bank said the following:

> The institution is first and foremost a development bank. It is not to be a political battleground of ideologies or creeds. The bank's concern is to reconcile service with sound business and idealism with common sense in economic and financial matters. . . .
>
> The bank should be seen as a new factor helping to create a better investment climate in Africa and thus to induce more public and private investment through the bank itself and outside it. Our work will help to bring into focus the various problems of development in Africa. Being an indigenous institution

owned by Africans and managed by Africans, the bank will be all the more able to appreciate the peculiar problems of Africa. . . .

The idea of neighbouring states' cooperating in the field of economic development in order to have larger markets for their new industries and generally to make a more rational use of their resources is gradually gaining acceptance. . . .

Any form of multinational cooperation is liable to give rise to organisational and financial problems, but I believe that if the necessary efforts are made to achieve effective cooperation in this direction, Africa will witness a more rapid rate of economic growth. As governors are aware, the bank is required to give priority to projects or programmes of a multinational nature or those which have been designed to make the economies of member countries increasingly complementary. This is a role of special interest to the bank, and we hope that member countries will do everything within their power to facilitate our efforts in this new and difficult field. . . .

The bank opened its doors for business on July 1, 1966, and the board of directors reported in July 1967 that the highlights of the bank's activity had been to examine proposals relating to road and rail transport projects with a view to helping the creation of an integrated transport system for Africa and in the "implementation of a sound programme for establishing an African network of telecommunications." Loan requests for other development projects within the national boundaries of member states were also under consideration.

The Institute of Economic Development

This institution has begun to receive African nationals who are given training and refresher courses in a number

of important subjects connected with planning and development. As a research centre also, this institution is bound to improve over time the quality of human capital in Africa.

Chapter X
Postretirement Years

It is said that in India, as elsewhere, men feel distressed as they near superannuation. This is generally true. One reason probably is that we are more fearful then of death and retirement marks a significant and meaningful event in the onward march of our life. There is also the awareness of the impending loss of what somebody called "the lubricants and cushions of power," which even the most honest among big and small bureaucrats enjoy. The big change in the life of a member of the former Indian Civil Service, for example, on retirement should not be difficult to appreciate. For these Romans of the British Raj, as they have been called, the very feel of power is like a heady wine. For the majority of people, however, financial repercussions of retirement pose a problem, particularly when the responsibilities arising out of unfulfilled obligations loom large before them. Still many more dread the sudden stopping of the whirlpool of activities in which they have been involved for years on end. Much depends upon the manner in which one is able to diversify one's interests during active years. Going to work in the midst of growing urbanisation in India and getting back home consumes time and puts much strain on the physical stamina of most middle-class people. This and attending to chores like purchase of rations and other essential goods of daily use, sometimes giving tuition to kids at home, leave an average

office-going individual neither the time nor the energy to seek relaxation and pleasure in pursuits such as painting or playing a musical instrument. Even reading as a habit is quite rare. One may also ask whether the drabness of our daily lives can be wholly explained on economic grounds. Apart from economic constraints there are other conditioning factors. Apart from some states in the west and south of the country we are generally born into homes in which music and dance as activities for refreshing body and spirit are conspicuously absent, the almost perpetual blaring of film songs by the ubiquitous transistor radio making the situation not a bit better. At school the only activity to familiarise students with singing is daily prayer, and later at college poetry and drama in English or vernacular languages are taught, to say the least, superficially, the students in English particularly trying to cross the Rubicon with the help of notes. The faculty to appreciate and enjoy poetry is in most cases, therefore, not developed. With such a background most of us who fill the ranks of the middle class become almost half-educated robots and start life with hardly any equipment or interest in anything but beating the wonted track and earning our daily bread as best we can. The upper middle class is hardly different; the relative economic advantages they have give them leisure and some extra resources. They have generally been to a university, but books would have no marked appeal for them. The daily newspaper or picture magazines engage their attention after they are free from from their long hours of bridge and gossip at the club.

Noble exceptions apart, this is not an overdrawn description of our mental equipment as we approach retirement. One or two civil servants in a decade may express their preference for a free life or their resentment over

things by asking for early release from service. Professional men also do this occasionally, but their actions hardly stem from motives such as vindication of a principle or to keep their self-respect intact. Having gained ample ground in their fields, physicians, for instance, sometimes, want to reap maximum harvest from their training and experience undisturbed by the vagaries of bureaucratic behaviour.

All said and done, few like to sit at home, whatever the station in life one has enjoyed. The very top layer of public servants, eminent judges, and highly placed civil servants never seem to retire. Various factors appear to favour many of them, their old contacts, malleability, and even a flair for sycophancy, but quite often their innate worth and suitability for some sensitive public positions are in evidence. Many others get work in private establishments, but large numbers of retired people inevitably find themselves burdened with too much leisure. Old age may, however, bring some advantages like maturity of judgement and an attitude of detachment. One may also cultivate, consequently, what has been called an inner life. If this is combined with the pursuit of some cultural interests developed over time the retired individual can convert his burden into a blessing.

While I was not different from many, I did not feel unduly concerned with the coming event during the last two or three years of my government service. I made only one serious effort to have some years added to the normal span of my service. Casting my eyes around, I thought it would be nice to get a place on the state public service commission. I imagined I had the requisite qualifications for this, with my academic background and administrative experience. To be sure, I spoke to an important person on whom I thought I had some claim. He had very high status

in government, though little executive power. He seemed to jump at the idea, saying I would be an asset to the commission, and, further, it was time the miniority community had some representation in this body. Encouraged, I broached the subject with a minister who had an effective say in things, and though my relationship with him had seriously soured, I had trust in his honesty and regard for the value of this institution in a democratic setup. He loved reading books and believed that respect for merit should be the basic consideration in filling government posts. And then, he too came from a minority community and both of us were made conscious of this fact of so belonging by the atmosphere that enveloped us and by whose logic we were governed, each in his respective sphere of activity. Of all people, therefore, I thought he would take a longer jump when I mooted the matter before him. I was wrong in ignoring the fact that, more than anything else, he was a political animal. He dampened my enthusiasm straightaway. These positions, he frankly averred, were "political carrots" and there was no question of anybody imagining he would be an asset to the organisation.

A word about politics and politicians: So long as man lives in organised communities there will be politics. These, however, change from epoch to epoch as, indeed, they have over centuries in the past. Elemental politics, so to say, arises from the desire for state power and the need to devise means for holding onto it. Thus Machiavelli's Prince was an archetypal politician, and the kings of the medieval and modern times were politicians par excellence. The philosophy they propounded, like their divine right to rule and the institutional outfit that they established, had only one purpose in view—the perpetuation of the concerned political system. Compulsions of

history are, however, inexorable. They originate in the mind of man. The rebellious spirit challenges the politics of the day. The individual has rights, it is proclaimed, that cannot be infringed upon. This represents a monumental landmark in the history of man. The social revolutions in Europe and in the New World in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gave a status to the individual unheard of before. A new and far-reaching dimension was introduced into the art of social management. The individual being the source of state power, he should be the master of his own destiny, but obviously in a large community every single individual cannot wield this power. He must allow himself to be ruled by his representative. Political democracy as a way of running civil society is thus based on the concept of people's active participation in the choosing of their representatives.

This leads inevitably to the organisation of political parties and the emergence of the present-day politician. The prime purpose of the political party is to capture state power if it does not happen to have it and thereafter to continue having it. Whether large or small, the party has a small coterie of politicians who have wormed their way to the top by virtue of their experience, wisdom, and party work, or lack of any or all of them. This is a caucus that calls the tune for all party members to dance to. Or if there is a charismatic leader at the top everybody else, more or less, is a hack. All members in a normal situation appeal to the political sovereign—the people—whose virtues and primacy they never tire of emphasising. The party members want the people at the same time to listen to their version of what is good for them. It is the essence of democracy that in a free and fair election people decide which of the parties should be entrusted with power. Liberty of the individual, equality before the law, freedom

from arbitrary arrest, and freedom of press and association are the time-honoured rewards that man has demanded after much strife and striving.

Alongside of this, the inventiveness of man again brought about change in the arts of production. This process initiated in the eighteenth century in England has been enlarged over the years by advancement in science resulting in continued development in technology. Its future is still to unfold itself, but its social and economic impact on the Western world has been unparallelled in man's history. Society became affluent and continues to grow rich. All men and women, however, did not share equally in this prosperity. Men had struggled and become politically free, but now a new awareness dawned on the large majority of these people. They were not the beneficiaries in this process of economic growth to the degree they thought they deserved. There had been writers who gave expression in philosophical terms to this social inequality until a genius among them appeared in the nineteenth centrury. Karl Marx created a revolution in the social thinking of men no less poignant than the technological revolution that was under way. The workers, the philosopher said, really produced the wealth of which they were largely deprived by an unjust social system. The private ownership of capital was self-perpetuating, he explained. The new social objective by the side of liberty of old now came to be economic equality. The worker in Western Europe and the United States is undoubtedly living a much better life, in the economic sense, than he was half a century ago. But income differences continue to exist.

While almost all the political parties in the countries mentioned above profess faith in the democratic system, some of them are on the left, some on the right, and some

in the middle of the political spectrum. They all believe in state welfarism, though they differ sharply in regard to the extent to which they would like the state to go in promoting individual welfare. The conservative parties of the right would be content with a minimum dose of welfare measures, while the socialists would radically transform the productive system of their societies and launch extensive and far-reaching welfare measures, including large wage hikes. One characteristic difference between the parties of the right and left is that while the former would not worry about income inequalities—they would, indeed, like them to exist—the socialists, particularly those on the extreme left, want to narrow down substantially differences in income levels. The communists like those presently in Italy and France seem to be coming closer to socialists by agreeing to function within the multiparty system of government. The British and German socialists continue, however, to favour a mild form of socialism. They represent the original version of social democracy.

Liberalism and social democracy in Western Europe took a long time to grow and manifest themselves fully, but the thoughts of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were unbound by time and space and, having captured men's minds everywhere, all too suddenly, seemed to help man to fashion a new social order. It was a total break with the past, as if the visions of an extraordinary architect and planner were getting translated into reality. A socialist state was born in czarist Russia and later in ancient China. If we ignore the latter-day ideological differences that developed between these two states, it is true they represented a unique development in the art of social engineering. They, along with the states of Eastern Europe, were often called the East in international polemics to distinguish them from the West. The two blocs showed scant

respect for each other, the socialist states considering themselves as genuine peoples' democracies. The Western world cherished the thought that their world was truly democratic and free. The two social orders stood for different value systems, and did not seem to be qualitatively comparable. It can be stated, however, with a certain amount of certainty, that the outstanding feature of Western society was its faith in liberty, while in the other the animating principle was equality, which, based as it was on compassion and humanism, was the highest expression of man's social conscience.

There is a polarization of the world in respect to methods of social organisation. Some of the new nation-states of the world are young. Born in a highly complex world, they are struggling against internal difficulties and compulsions and external pressures. As one of them, India had adapted its methods of social management to the achievement of specific ends. The ends are basically to ensure for people economic and social justice in a social order in which they enjoy human rights like freedom of speech and press and association and of the protection of life and freedom from arbitrary arrest. The means chosen are government responsible to an elected parliament representing the executive authority. An independent judiciary to watch over the implementation by the executive of these stipulations has been established. That may be a crude though simple way of describing the chief features of the social and political framework enshrined in our constitution. That was over a quarter-century ago, and much water has since flowed under our bridges and we seem to be at the crossroads of our social evolution. We have been trying to combine the virtues of the two democratic types of the so-called Eastern and Western worlds in the governance of this country, with results of a mixed nature. The

individual has enjoyed, barring for a brief period of time, various freedoms, including freedom of expression and association and of protection of life and limb. He has tasted the pleasure of exercising his franchise. In the economic field we have achievements to our credit of no mean order. We have fought wars and, despite unsympathetic pronouncements of our friends and foes, demonstrated our ability to maintain the integrity of the country in the midst of crises of various kinds. But the age-old poverty of the majority of our people remains and constitutes our major challenge. They live in conditions of dire distress, so that we are faced not so much with the question of reducing income inequalities but, in absolute terms, increasing substantially, along with production, the consumption of goods and services by these people. The problem appears to be intractable inasmuch as with over three decades of planned development we have barely touched the fringes of our economic problems in this regard. It has been stated that not only has such growth as has taken place not meant much to about 40 percent of our population, but concentration of economic power has actually increased. One may not agree with this, and it may even be urged that everybody is better off than before. Even so, people living on the subsistence level and below do make a considerable number. They may be over a third of the entire population. Can it be that we are much too many vis-à-vis our resources and there may be a ring of truth in the gloomy foreboding of the Japanese economists who saw no hope for a real change in our economic situation for a very long time indeed. Our own economists have not been proved wiser prophets by events of the past years of planning. Growth actually registered by the economy has been too much off the mark.

Have we now a clearer view of our aims and methods? We gave ourselves for some years a respite from the erstwhile exercise of framing short- and long-term projections of our growth rate. We planned from year to year, almost simply distributing funds over channels that are well entrenched now. Day-to-day problems like inflation, rural indebtedness, and the questions of bonded labour and sick mills engaged our attention. Reformist measures like those pertaining to enforcement of land ceilings in urban and rural areas and, here and there, taking over of private enterprises are said to be attempts at socialisation of the economy. This can be efficient administration helping to hold the edifice together, but it hardly touched the core of the economic problem, namely, what are the factors responsible for our past frustration and how can we avoid them in the future? It must be said that with the improvement in the general economic condition of the country, more or less successful control over prices, and substantial increase in our foreign exchange reserves and liberalisation of industrial policy one can hope that the new five-year plans will have a happier going than the earlier plans. The outlook for the future, however, is far from certain. This was the position in the mid-seventies.

There remains the question of liberty versus economic growth and equality. Are these two social objectives mutually exclusive in the sense that economic development with social justice is not possible within a democratic order the essence of which is, as stated above, the various freedoms for the individual. It is seriously alleged that there is a certain amount of antagonism between these freedoms and sucessful execution of development plans. It is also held, seriously, that when freedom is abridged in the interests of economic growth with social justice there is no damage done to democracy.

Since our aim is to bring about material improvement in the economic condition of about half of the population, this must entail a good amount of sacrifice on the part of the richer sections of the community. This would mean, among other things, heavy taxation and even a certain amount of curtailment of property rights or wholesale socialisation of the means of production. If we choose the former way we may have it within a completely democratic order. Inequality of incomes will get reduced in the process eventually. Should we prefer the second course, i.e., complete socialisation of production, we will be choosing socialism as it is generally understood. In this case social justice will receive precedence over the freedom of the individual. Not only will a new production system be built over time, but a new way of life will be born for people. In one case, i.e., when we retain freedom of the individual and accelerate as much as possible economic growth, we do not have socialism, and in the other freedom of the individual as understood generally is absent.

We thus have to clear much air. Concepts have to be defined. What meaning do we attach to democracy and what to socialism? Since it is people who have to work hard and bring about social change, it would in the long run be a counterproductive policy to cause confusion in their minds by holding that we are evolving our own type of political democracy and our own version of socialism. We may ultimately have neither and even economic progress may be less than it would be otherwise. The luxury of equivocation can be indulged in by a prosperous country if at all, not by a poor country like ours. The examples of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia are before us.

Here are problems not only for the economist, but also for the social scientist, the moral philosopher, and the enlightened politician.

Many of these thoughts were in my mind when in early 1972 I returned home. There was leisure enough for me to at, long last, try my hand at self-expression and in other ways employ my mind in the pursuit of aims whose fulfillment had always eluded me. My work started so many years ago at Allahabad was in shambles, a condition brought about primarily by my preference for the comfortable, though much duller, jobs in the government. I had, moreover, failed to make adequate arrangements for the safekeeping of my books and papers during my long absence from home. Apart from some valuable books that were missing, I found that my manuscript on population theory and economic development had suffered much devastation. My first task, therefore, was to retrieve from this state of confusion all that was possible. That done, I searched for means that would enable me to carry out my plans, which were simply to complete my study on population and simultaneously bring my brief autobiographical work that I had begun some time back to an early conclusion.

My population study, I would like to repeat, had covered the contribution made by major classical and neoclassical economists to theory of population. I began with Malthus and examined critically his claim that numbers inevitably pressed against the means of subsistence and there was bound to be misery if the balance between numbers and food was upset. Against the background of this basic thesis, so to speak, I studied the views of a number of economists, including Ricardo, J. S. Mill, and Marshal, until I came to the point when over- and underpopulations were considered as facts of life in the world. The examples of the United States and the United Kingdom were examined to study the relationship between a fall in the rate of growth of population and national income. If a country

could be underpopulated there could be overpopulation in another in circumstances in which too many people hampered the growth of the economy. India's case was given thought. Between states of overpopulation and underpopulation, one asked, could there be a condition resembling a plateau on a curve that represented the point at which the population of a country should be established? This concept engaged my attention for a long time, and besides reading extensively at Allahabad and at Johns Hopkins University, I discussed the question of optimum population with notable economists like Lorimer and Gautlieb. The latter had written in some depth on this question in an American journal. The French writer Suavy had also published a monograph on the subject that was quite illuminating. The feeling grew in me that while theoretically it was conceivable that in terms of the optimum utilisation of a country's resources there was a number of people that was appropriate as the size for the country's population, in actual practice it may be difficult to quantify the point.

My long years of work in the government secretariat came between me and this study, but my being so engaged had one positive aspect. The knowledge I acquired of the administrative setup, its workings, and the economic potential of the state and the peculiar features, social and economic, of its various regions would be useful, so I thought, in filling up the gap that existed in my work on population problems. All that I had to do now was update the theoretical contribution to population studies that had been made on a phenomenal scale in the world and then to study Kashmir's economic condition in its relationship with changing numbers from decade to decade. It was obvious that this study would be self-rewarding mainly as a way of engaging my time and also perhaps satisfying

my ego. I toyed with the idea of bringing a few friends together to found a centre for social and economic studies. I approached Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla before he became chief minister, and also a central minister. The former's mind seemed to be too preoccupied with other matters so that I did not feel encouraged to mention this subject beyond referring to the woeful lack of public discussion of social and economic problems of the state and the utter paucity of statistical data on them publicly available.

The local press is hardly in a position to organise public debates on economic matters. It was technically not equipped for it. There are no professional journals devoted to social and economic studies. This is a legacy from the past and is a symptom of our backwardness. The government's activity in the collection of economic data started over three decades ago had made some progress. Publication of a statistical digest and some studies was begun by me in the Planning Department several years ago. The digest is now more comprehensive, but as in other parts of the country, there are so many discrepancies and gaps in methods of collection and presentation of data. There are large areas of our economic and social life about which nothing is known, such as, for instance, the economic potential of hilly areas and of far-flung places like Kishtwar and Lakakh. Even such material as the government published was not readily available and, in any case, there were few takers who would work on this information and stimulate public thinking. There was need, therefore, for an autonomous body to make its own investigation into the economic and social situation, collect relevant data and subject it to systematic analysis, and study and prepare reports. This agency would not only supplement what the

government was doing in this field, but create an arrangement for collaboration between itself and the government in this important sphere, stimulate public interest, and bring about much greater understanding between the people and the government in the formulation and execution of economic policies and plans. I was anxious to obtain Sheikh Abdulla's assistance for moral and financial reasons. As it was, not much success attended my efforts, nor did I score anything substantial with my attempts to get some friends into this enterprise. It soon occurred to me that while there was an agreement that there should be a centre, for which a substantial sum of money would be initially needed and could be raised, there was no agreement for what specific purpose the centre would be required. For one of us it should turn out a newspaper exposing the weaknesses of the government; for another what was immediately necessary was to provide him with an office and a telephone. The whole project, as I had conceived it, was not appreciated and it turned out to be starry-eyed. A way out of the impasse appeared from an unexpected quarter. On my return from abroad I had paid a courtesy visit to the state chief minister, Mir Qasim. I was later invited to attend a meeting that had been called to consider a working paper on the state's fifth plan. I attended the meeting and with that a chain of events both odd and unpleasant was set in motion. I had myself unwittingly become the cause.

I must here admit to having some weaknesses that sometimes prove harmful. I have often found it difficult to play the role of a second fiddler in situations where I feel I have something useful to say and I do so sometimes a bit too bluntly and even aggressively. This happened almost invariably whenever the company included men from outside the state. I always felt the gorge rising in me.

It was not as if I had developed some sort of complex, but it was a spontaneous reaction to the airs with which statements were flaunted in our faces or questions asked of the people coming from "J&K," a state to be treated as a special case, as if here were suckling babes who had to be made to stand on their legs. This was not only a matter of political compulsion, but we were, it was implied, at a low level of competence and could not be judged by standards applied to others. How else could one keep one's self-confidence and self-respect intact, except perhaps by expressing oneself in a brutally frank manner? It was not unusual those days for a joint secretary or any other senior officer on a visit to the state to barge into one's room unannounced when a meeting was going on. For us, in New Delhi, a prior appointment with any tin god was obligatory. Small things as they were, they filled me with much bitterness, convinced as I was that there was on the whole not much difference between the competence levels of the parties on the two sides of a discussion table and given our salary and the general status that our own administration allowed us we were giving an adequate account of ourselves and some of us could safely exchange places without any damage being done to public business. Mention must, however, be made of top-level central officers, who were invariably courteous and men of understanding.

The working paper "Outline for the Fifth Plan" was an exercise modelled on the draft outline issued by the centre. I thought that the outlay proposed for capital formation was very inadequate. This was of course an exceptionable feature of the central draft also, which as is well known was eventually reviewed. State plans, it has been my experience, do little of original work in plan preparation, in the sense that the broad pattern of development

so far as sectors of economic activity, distribution of outlay among them, and even the projects within them are taken as given entities and they confine their contribution to filling in the blanks, so to speak. There was much talk of planning from below, though. Felt requirements of the people at the Panchayat block and district levels were sought to be ascertained and integrated into the state plans, which, presumably, were to form the basis, to a large extent, of the national plan. But the states, in dutiful compliance with central directives in regard to the nature of the investment pattern and individual projects and the time schedule laid down for the finalisation of the plan, largely left behind the result of the effort initiated at the grass roots and accomplished the task of preparing the state plan without considering it. It could be said that state plans were, largely, the outcome of the all-India plan rather than the reverse. I raised this point at the meeting by asking what study had been made of the special problems of the state and how the results were reflected in the outline. The economist from the centre more or less endorsed my two observations about the quantum of capital formation proposed and what he appropriately called the thrust of the state plan: my special comment was, however, reserved for agricultural production and the subsidy that was being paid to consumers in urban centres of the state. It was, in my view, valid to argue that there ought to be some relationship between the projects designed to increase food production, for which it was claimed some targets had been fulfilled, and the food subsidy. In this context I also pleaded for a review of the financial condition of the state.

The question of food subsidies had always been a sensitive subject. It was considered justified on economic

and political grounds. I thought the economic factors bearing on this proposition called for a dispassionate enquiry. There was also a moral aspect to the matter. I must have sounded too emphatic while arguing about the need for bringing a fresh approach to this question and also to place a greater accent on some particular sectors, like small-scale industries and handicrafts and tourism. The chief minister, who was present for the greater part of the meeting, did not show any particular reaction to my particular and general observations. The chief secretary said, however, about some of my observations that they were "well taken." I could not say that about my erstwhile colleagues in the bureaucracy who were now major functionaries in the field. I had been, in a sense, critical of the working paper, and this, along with the point I made regarding the food subsidies and other matters, seemed to have caused much annoyance. This understanding receives support from developments that followed this meeting and ran their course for quite some time.

The chief minister sent me word that he was constituting the state planning board and he had nominated me as a member. He must have also directed the department concerned that I should be associated with drawing up of the Fifth Plan. The department knew their minds and set about to carry out the wishes of the chief minister in a manner that enabled them to keep me at a safe distance without appearing at the same time to be flouting orders. A copy of the order constituting various working groups for preparing the Fifth Plan was forwarded to me. A number of groups were formed, one of which was for employment and something else equally peripheral. I was a member of this group. Not that they had forgotten about my membership. Whenever a general change like the addition

of a member to-some group or other was made the despatcher, faithful to his post, kept me informed of the change by forwarding me a copy of the order. By the time the Fifth Plan was finalised my contact with the department and its work on the plan was only through this despatcher, who forwarded to me once or twice copies of office orders about absolutely trivial administrative matters. While the chief minister's order was carried out, even though in an extremely clumsy manner, they would not permit the other wish of his to be put into effect at all. Quite serious, it seems, was the unease caused by the desire of the chief minister to have me on the board. One of the senior ministers in those days gave me the unsolicited news that I had been chosen for what appeared to him a highly worthwhile purpose, namely, the membership of the planning board. When this did not happen I, meeting him by chance at a wedding, asked him about the matter. He was, indeed, bemused, for he had seen my name on a typed list. That showed the anxiety felt by the department over the prospect of my membership and the frantic nature of the effort put in to prevent it from becoming a fact. That is how a bureaucracy functions. It has internal politics that are corrosive to straight and honest discharge of public business.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla assumed power in the state in February 1974. He did not take long to address himself to problems relating to economic development of the state. A development review committee was appointed. The chief minister had come to the helm of affairs for the second time after the long interval of twenty-one years. Much had happened during this period in the field of development with which, it was alleged, he was not quite happy. It was in the fitness of things, therefore, that a review was desired to be made of what had been

achieved and in which sectors progress had been inadequate. Recommendations about the future would, of course, be a natural corollary. The high purpose that motivated this decision was reflected in the composition of the committee. The leading figures in the country in various development fields like industry, agriculture, small-scale industries and handicrafts, business management, and banking were there. So were also notable economists and administrators of the highest status and experts on environmental problems and tourism of conspicuous ability. There was a sprinkling of local concerned officers.

Evidently, I owed my nomination to this committee to my previous association with the chief minister. I was relatively a dark horse. Though no ignoramus, I possessed neither the academic status of some of the members nor the high position in the government, central and state, that several other members enjoyed. The only asset I possessed was my confidence that I would be able to do some useful work on the committee in view of my familarity with and close understanding of the problems, economic and social, of the state. I was also keenly aware of the significant fact that good plans had floundered, in large measure, because our administrative and financial procedures were cumbersome and quite often out-of-date and the motivation for work of most of our officials was hardly attuned to the dynamism that time-bound programmes of action demanded of them. There were several other administrative deficiencies. Knowing this, I looked forward to a fruitful spell of work, hoping in the process to get mentally refreshed in this group with much talent and experience. I was wrong.

I was asked to prepare a paper, which I did with considerable difficulty. The material supplied was limited,

and in spite of my efforts I could establish no official contacts to get information and discuss things. There was no secretarial assistance either. I was wholly on my own. The paper was circulated among the members without, however, the opening and the concluding paragraphs. In the opening paragraph I had said the following:

The committee has been asked, among other things, to make a review of the development efforts in the state. I considered this important not only for the light it might throw on the results achieved so far, but for the directions it may indicate in which improvement is necessary. I have chosen some important fields in this regard to show, broadly though, what kind of problems beset them.

The concluding paragraph was:

I have drawn my picture on a large canvas. The task assigned to the committee is evidently a wide-ranging one. I have tried to say what appeared to me essential for a general understanding of some of our problems. The note may serve as a backdrop for the committee's deliberations. It would be of practical advantage to form an idea at the outset of what those deliberations should aim at. Is a new five-year plan to be drawn up? Alternatively, will the committee consider the existing plan and its individual projects, drop some, lay more emphasis on a few, and introduce new ones? The internal consistency of the plan and new financial implications as a result of the change will, of course receive attention. We have, in this connection, to consider the point that the present plan must be the result of much preparatory work and thought here and examination at the centre.

It seems to me that to bring our work within manageable limits it would be difficult, procedurally, to avoid committee work. Four or five committees, preferably based on the choice of members, may be consitituted. Each committee may have the

secretary of the government department concerned as convenor. He will be responsible for bringing about meetings of the committee and preparing its report for the coordination committee, which will be one of the committees. At appropriate intervals the meetings of the parent commitee may be called.

This omission appeared ominous, for besides being harmless, the paragraphs were, to my understanding, not without some merit. The need to have a clearer view of the committee's objectives and devise an arrangement for its work was obvious. At any rate, these two statements could be the subject of a discussion.

Two more disappointments followed. Since educational problems were under study in another committee, this vital field, it was declared, would not be considered by this committee at all. This was singularly unfortunate, for as I had stated in my paper, an intractable area of our national life in its relationship with the development effort was our educational system. While the need, for example, for skilled and trained manpower was self-evident and so much was being done to accelerate their supply, large numbers of young men highly trained and others, were unemployed. Both long-term and short-term imperatives made it necessary to untie the knots of this vexing problem in a practical manner. Several attempts were made in the past, and high-power national and state bodies had been appointed to look into them. Highly valued reports had emerged, but the imbalance between supply of end products from our institutions of various kinds and absorption of them in the economy was not only persisting, but perhaps getting accentuated. The situation in this state was not at all different. While formulating plans, therefore, for economic change it would be inconceivable to me not to make educational plans an integral part of our studies.

Whether educationists were co-opted by the committee or the report of the above-mentioned committee was awaited and in consultation with them made to fit into the economic review committee's report was a different matter. But to cut off this area from the committee's deliberations was not, in my view, a sound approach to development.

It was, similarly, announced that since state finances were the subject of another committee, this field would not directly come under our examination. For more than one reason it was difficult for me to appreciate this decision. One important way of evaluating the result of past development effort is to assess the return on investment in various sectors. It is easy to do this in respect of power irrigation and industrial projects that have been in operation for some time. Similar estimates can be made about the effect of outlay on roads, tourism, and development of transport in general. Overall impact on the revenues of the state of development expenditure, particularly the existence or otherwise of investible surplus in state undertakings, is studied with advantage. It throws light on past performance and yields estimates of future investible resources. The incidence of the tax system and identification of the sections of the community where money income may have grown more, relative to others, can also be examined. I had made a brief mention in my paper of the considerable increase in the income of some groups of people, like the big orchardists. There was a case where I argued for change in our fiscal policy. Budgetary problems are indeed intimately connected with development both in the matter of drawing up the plan and in its implementation. Outright exclusion of these matters, whatever the circumstances, seemed to me wrong.

The committee was a large one, having about a dozen and a half members. All of them could not, for good reasons, attend every meeting. I attended all but the last two,

when some reports that had been prepared by members were properly discussed and adopted. Attending a com- mittee meeting was like attending a conference. With so many officers present, who were all to participate in dis- cussions pertaining to their departments, I was reminded of the annual plan meetings of yesteryear in New Delhi, which were large congregations of officials representing the centre and the state where there was much talk, but substantial results left much to be desired. Papers of knowledgeable members had been circulated, some of them pedestrian and others quite original and educative. There was occasionally an air of unreality about the discus- sions, and I doubted the relevance of some of them to our task in hand, such as, for instance, the laudable, though somewhat romantic talk, about building housing colonies on plateaus in the valley or of designing straightaway an econometric model for the state plan. Moreover, able men with sharp minds can think and develop ideas on the spur of the moment. So they did and told the committee of various ways that could bring prosperity to the state. All these were thoughts that required debate and their practi- cability discussed in smaller groups where local officials working in the relevant fields could have their full and free say. Plans, of course, cannot be worked out in confer- ences, and I felt indescribably choked, unable to stand the too solemn environment of these meetings and much more. I struck, all the same, a discordant note or two. About agriculture my thesis supported by figures, was that the deficit in the state's food production was either nonexistent or its existence was exaggerated. Secondly, though theoretically higher procurement prices for paddy should help increase production and enable the govern- ment to procure more of it, experience of the past indicated a closer look be taken at this problem. There was a fair

measure of official and unofficial support for this view. There was also the related question of raising food prices to the all-India level. This again was a matter that required much greater thought than could be given at the moment. An enquiry into local cost of food production was also relevant. The effect on consumer prices in urban areas already bearing the major burden of taxation had also to be considered.

It was alleged at the meeting that in the past projects had been started without due regard having been given to their economic and financial soundness and that there had been much wasting of money. Earlier, I had occasion to say in a smaller group of the committee that this impression betrayed ignorance of the procedures in vogue in the state for a long time. No project or scheme is able to draw public funds without details, technical and financial, having been drawn up and sanctioned. Quite a good number of them are subjected to scrutiny at the centre. Leakage of funds has, of course, taken place, but this has been the result of inefficient and objectionable practices adopted in project implementation. Furthermore, leakage of funds is a problem in itself. Making money on the sly has been with us for a long time, and it is not the monopoly of any particular era or regime. It is difficult to hold the view that this evil is not increasing. The contrary may be true. Political factors have also played a part. At any rate, a review of some significant sectors of economic activity under the plan would have thrown much light on this matter and yielded useful lessons for the future. But this was not to be. There was no review in the main review committee, and the small group mentioned above did not survive the first meeting. Similarly, no thought was given to the administrative system, whether to mention only one aspect

of it, in terms of delegation of power financial and administrative, any change was necessary. Nor was a view taken of the adequacy or otherwise of the district or block development administrations so vital for rural development.

I had also much to say about sectoral distribution of outlays. The time had come, as stated in my paper, for us to consider whether the quantum of outlay in public health and medical facilities should not be increased substantially. Social justice demanded this. There were large areas, both rural and urban, that suffered from insufficiency or total absence of drinking water. And its quality, too, required much improvement. Not one town in the state has a sewage system. Much has been done in the medical field, but far-reaching qualitative improvement in respect of equipment, personnel, and organisation is necessary if regular exodus of patients to places outside the state is to be reduced, as it well can be. Related to this is the need to institute some kind of social control over the medical profession in order that the poorer sections of the community may in these or other ways receive medical attention in a satisfactory manner.

It is perhaps vain to add that the committee did not like to engage itself in preparing a plan for the state. The terms of reference of the committee were clear. They did specifically say that "the committee shall undertake a review of the development efforts in the state . . . " and shall in particular "identify the sectors in which the progress achieved so far has been inadequate and indicate the directions in which further development would be particularly advantageous" and also "make recommendation for a policy framework." What did this connote? A discussion, as I had suggested, would have spelt this out. As it was, this aspect of the matter remained perhaps ambiguous to the very end. Nevertheless, the report of this eminence was bound to be very useful and so it is, particularly

in the fields of agriculture, tourism, and environmental control. Further, its greatest value, again stemming from its composition, was that its recommendations had very little chance of being discarded.

It has been my good fortune that successive regimes in the state since 1947 have thought well of me, and on my part I offered my loyalty to them and spared myself no pains to give them satisfaction by hard work and observed high standards of probity. Word came for the third time in two years or so that simultaneously as member of the development review committee I was being nominated to the state planning board, which was being reconstituted. When the board was reborn without my becoming directly aware of it I concluded that my tongue-in-cheek comments and "inept performance" must have suitably supplemented the earlier efforts of my previous colleagues, mention of which has been made before. It is highly improbable that I am tilting at windmills. The irony of this funny episode is that it appeared as if I were trying to hit the stars and even angels could not reach me there. The truth of the matter was that I had from experience no illusions about the effectiveness of such boards, but I had hoped to acquire source material for my unfinished work by becoming a member of one of them. As it was, I decided to withdraw into my shell and do whatever was possible to use my time fruitfully.

Epilogue

The story ended within a brief period after my return from Somalia in December 1971 and into retirement. It is resumed briefly in response, almost under a sense of compulsion, to the traumatic happenings in Kashmir, necessitating some repetition of matters already covered to provide perspective.

It has been my good fortune to have been able to profit during my years of public service from the diversity of climate which obtains in the northern region of India. Kashmir has salubrious climate in the summer, when it is the state capital. In the winter, Jammu, the capital city, is pleasant for some months. My service took me to these cities in respectively good seasons. In the almost two decades of my retirement I followed the same schedule, in between paying a few visits to the USA to see my children.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla's second incarnation as the leader of Kashmir National Conference in the early seventies and appointment as chief minister were important events. I met him twice during this period, once before he assumed office and once after. At the first meeting he told me, "Did you see what he did to me?" He was obviously referring to Jawaharlal Nehru, former prime minster. Abrupt and spontaneous as the statement was, I was slightly fazed and my mind leapt to the other side of the picture as I knew it. Later, on becoming chief minister, when I met him briefly, I found him exuberant. He said

he was like a dynamo, implying perhaps that he was ready to start work earnestly. With Sheikh Sahib's new administration, Kashmir seems to have started, in more than one respect, on the downward path. While development activities received a fillip, the currents of political dissidence began simmering again. These were a hallmark of his previous regime, though in a subdued form. His contribution now to this social phenomenon was a well-articulated and sustained attitude of ambivalence towards political issues. The reputation of the government was not helped by the widespread feeling that a lack of honest practices in administration, with which people were for long much too familiar, were all-pervasive, causing distress to indigent sections of people, many of whom were trying to improve their living conditions. During my summer visits to the valley, I sensed this prevalent frustration. People were critical of the bureaucracy, the politicians of the National Conference who—the general feeling was—were mindful of their personal interests ignoring those of the people. Despite this, there was no overt activity indicating general unease. Obviously, the father figure of Sheikh Abdulla was able to exert a steadying hand, and some sort of social order was in place. Sheikh Abdulla passed away in 1982.

Before his death, his son was elected as head of the National Conference, a position which became for him a springboard for succeeding his father as chief minister. Conferment of power in this manner was nothing new. There was precedent for it in the country, but the general reaction of people was a mixture of indifference and resentment. The young man himself, whom I met at the time, was full of verve and enthusiasm.

The ensuing years—that is, after 1982—present a contrast to the whole history of Jammu and Kashmir after 1947. The state gave itself a constitution in the early fifties

under which a number of elections were held to the state legislature. Functioning within the federal set-up of India, there were ups and downs, as is not unusual, in the center-state relations. These took an ugly turn, however, in 1953. Life in the state after that year was normal for long years. No voice of dissent could be heard in the press or on platform. Economic development was marked. There was no doubt that the state was on the road to stability and growth. The question of accession to India was irrelevant to the daily life of people.

At this point one can speculate freely. Some events help. The Chinese aggression against India in 1962 seemed to stir up things. There are visitors from abroad counseling New Delhi to engage in international discussions over the good "old Kashmir problem." In September 1965, while attending a party at the Planning Commission, New Delhi, a senior officer informed me that an external attack on Jammu City was imminent. It turned out to be part of an invasion, of which the sudden appearance of infiltrating militants was the other wing. The war of 1965 between two regions of the sub-continent had started. This was followed by another war between them in 1971. That both these events caused by external factors failed to incite the Kashmiris; a historical fact of significance. There was no easily exploitable disaffection among people. Hope was not, however, given up by those who were committed to an idea and a political strategy. This is a Muslim majority area and must behave as such.

The years following the demise of Sheikh Abdulla, covering the major part of the eighties, were the saddest in the state's recent history, including the time when tribesmen were at the valley's doors. There were family feuds among some state leaders and elections were held to the state legislature, some fair and some not so fair. The Indian

National Congress for the first time in its long history decided to function in the state. There was, to say the least, a lack of direction and sense of purpose on the part of central and state leadership. There was a semblance of civil order but only a semblance. Curfews were clamped down much too often. What's more, defiance of law and civil authority became a sustained activity indulged in by political dissidents with impunity, so that wags designated, only half in jest, some parts of the city of Srinagar as foreign territory. The national press was uproarious.

It was during this period that divisiveness in the politics of central leadership, inter-party and intra-party, vis-à-vis, Kashmir, raised its ugly head in a spectacular fashion. People in the valley, at one time, had reacted famously and in admiration to benevolent policies pursued by officials in direct control only to be frustrated when they were removed. This only helped the subversives. With hindsight one can see how fertile the ground for external and internal forces of disruption was to have free play. The absence of effective government response to the developing situation was incredible. Future generations will demand a comprehensive study of these times, when all relevant records may hopefully become available and supplement the excellent work written on the subject by a former governor of the state.

On the surface things were different, at least to the unsuspecting eye, when I spent the long summer and autumn months of 1986 in my home town, the capital city of Srinagar. In the early days of November I began to pack my bags for travel to the United States. My car needed to be spruced up for the up-hill journey to Jammu. The hired driver advised that I accompany him to the private garage of a reliable relative of his in downtown Srinagar. I found

myself in the garage and private home of a Muslim gentleman and spent almost a full day there. My car was attended to, so was I with consideration and courtesy. When I left Srinagar in mid-December 1986, there was not the faintest hint that a flare-up of an unprecedented nature was in the offing.

At this point I allow myself to reflect philosophically on this upsurge which, though it erupted suddenly, was the culmination point of a process which began years ago. It had, after all, a historical background of three wars and much else. None the less, it seems pertinent to ask, Why did it occur in the form and manner it did? I discuss the problem under the following heads: The People; The Leadership; The Accession of 1947; The Aftermath of Accession; Prospect for the Future.

The People.

The valley of Kashmir is predominantly Muslim. It was not always so. Kashmir is as ancient as the rest of India. There is evidence of habitation in 2000 B.C. King Asoka extended his influence to Kashmir in the third century before Christ. The Hindu rule in Kashmir collapsed in the 14th century A.D. Thereafter a variety of foreign rulers followed, the Huns, Afghans, Moghuls, and Sikhs and Dogras.

The inexorable march of history brought about, among other things, a steady shrinkage in the number of its original inhabitants, resulting in the creation of a minority of them, the present day Kashmiri Pandits. The valley has had famous kings, Hindu and Muslim. Hindu kings like Lalitadatiya and Arantiraeman gave to Kashmir stability and vitality. The Muslim king, Zain-ul-Abdin, known also

as Badshah (Great Emperor), brought good name to Kash- mir, contributed to arts and culture as generously as he pursued plans for the country's economic development. He was catholic in his policies and tried to undo much wrong done by his predecessor Sikandar, during whose rule Hindus had to flee the land to settle on the Malabar Coast in southern India. He is reported to have tried to persuade the Brahmins to return to Kashmir or at least to return the books of sanskrit scholarship which they had taken along. Some sections of people in Malabar claim this ancestral relationship, as did some members of central services who visited us or worked in Kashmir.

There were calamitous times for the Hindus. There is legend and folklore among them beckoning to this. Thus, conservative Pandits out on searches for suitable matches for their daughters might occasionally sit back in frustra- tion and complain, "Are there only eleven Hindu house- holds in Kashmir?" referring to imagined times long gone by. Their love for the valley is almost pristine; wherever they may be, they look upon the land of their birth as their mother, and in common parlance it is so mentioned.

The Muslims: As a member of the minority community, I consider Muslims as my kinsmen of the ancient past. Our destiny has been common and is perhaps bound to be so in the future. I was closely associated with Muslims in a number of ways: as childhood friend, classmate, teacher, and as official boss. Hindus and Muslims have had a long history of warm relationship. No question, they lived in their separate worlds, but there was interdepen- dence and some participation in each other's joys and sor- rows, though not much socializing. Never in my experi- ence did I encounter serious, contentious or acrimonious posturing, through press or platform, by proponents of

various faiths. There were mosques and temples, sometimes existing side by side. In my immediate neighbourhood in Srinagar there was a gracious mosque where on special occasions large congregations of the faithful assembled in its compound to witness and offer worshipful obeisance to a holy object exhibited from the balcony above the compound. The religious fervor of the praying and chanting believers was impressive and I found myself, sometimes, in the midst of these crowds watching the scene joyously. This was long before 1947, when Mahatma Gandhi said during the horrendous killings of that year that he saw some light coming from Kashmir.

At this point it is worthy to mention that the personal rule of the maharajas in Jammu and Kashmir provided their "subjects" with social peace for about 100 years, after which, in a strange twist of history, as we progressed towards what we called freedom and progress, a new era of strife and discord was born.

The Leadership.

Sheikh Mohammed Abdulla was the prestigious and accredited leader of Kashmir. He was the foremost founder of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in the late thirties and saw it grow into a strong political organisation. As the only viable party engaged in grass roots political work it was responsible for mobilizing and articulating public opinion for the first time in living memory. By the time the Muslim League of India finalized its political agenda in 1940 based on the two-nation theory, the National Conference had sufficiently matured to offer it an effective front in Kashmir resulting in almost total absence of its influence there.

As I have noted before, I knew Sheikh Abdulla and came to admire his strength of character and love of freedom. He was a devout Muslim but I never heard him talk or act in a manner which would have the ardour of religious fanaticism. Indeed, he talked of other faiths, sometimes with warmth. Tall and handsome, he had the gift of a mellifluous voice. His politics were clear and firm, that is, before the winds of change began to blow over him. He believed in secularism and democracy and had a band of committed followers, some of whom were astute and experienced politicians. They had fought and won political battles before circumstances placed them in seats of power after October 1947.

Sheikh Abdulla is central to a study of the Kashmir problem, as it has been called. His tragedy, and I believe that of the Kashmiri people, was that the underpinnings of his personality including his political philosophy was not strong enough to withstand the influence on his psyche of his less committed colleagues and supporters, who acted with dedication to deflect him from his aims, so that, devout Muslim as he was, he began to waver early on.

In the early fifties, things were not settling down. State-center relations were under strain. More disturbing were reports of intra-party differences on some aspects of the problem. One of these was anecdotal but significant. One responsible person, speaking off the record, but from knowledge, mentioned to me that, at one of the meetings of ranking leaders which were being held, one of them gave expression to his sense of frustration over what he said was developing as a non-secular trend in the ongoing talks. Feeling apparently overwhelmed, he acted in an objectionable manner, this being the holy month of Ramdan, when observant Muslims do not drink or eat or smoke during daylight hours. The protesting gentleman, himself

a Muslim, helped himself to a smoke, emphasising the purpose of his doing so by stating, "See me perform the last secular act in this state."

The Accession of 1947.

The battle for the valley was started by what has been called the tribal raid in October 1947. I have already described the acute traumatic condition in which we lived in Srinagar at that time, without electricity, basic amenities or functioning civil authority. We heard about Sheikh Abdulla's flight to Delhi to request immediate succour. There is evidence of reluctance on the part of authorities in Delhi to send armed assistance. For those of us in Srinagar, it took an oppressively long time to arrive, but eventually I heard the booming of the guns from my house. The troops arrived and the battle was joined. It is recorded that militarily the "thread was slender." Simultaneously, negotiations with the maharaja were held and the instrument of accession signed.

Half a century later the valley is enveloped presently in an ethos radically different from the euphoria which overwhelmed the Kashmiris in the days and months following the tribal invasion of 1947. The National Conference was at its glorious best. Order in the city was maintained and its civil defence organised to face the situation in case the enemy entered the city. This was in line with the established creed of the party and was not an impulsive response to what was obviously a forced attempt to deprive people of their freedom.

The partition of the subcontinent of India was perhaps not in the best interests of its people. It is facile to be wise after the event, but for that reason the ifs of history are not

irrelevant particularly if its dynamism and contemporary circumstances support the cause of sceptics, and in this case sceptism has dogged us from the beginning. During and in the aftermath of World War II, the people of India were caught in a tangle of unparalleled complexity created by themselves and others, the majority of them having gone through long years of suffering and strife, with an aging leadership fervently anxious to solve the problems of economics and politics of their people.

It cannot be said that the people of India were consulted in the matter of the break-up of the country, which was at best a compromise aimed at offering a half-baked solution to a contentious problem. There were bound to be no winners in the long haul. Recent history of the subcontinent is not reassuring. It seems as though the scenario is similar to the one that existed in 1947, Kashmir occupying the central place in it.

Not having succeeded in demolishing the specter of the two-nation theory, the Indian National Congress did its soul some good by not allowing the Jammu and Kashmir state to become a casualty of this theory like the rest of the subcontinent. A major part of the credit for this goes, of course, to the Kashmir National Conference. But this was done half-heartedly. People will be consulted in due course when certain conditions prevailed, the accession agreement declared. This provision along with another in the Indian constitution, vis-à-vis, Jammu and Kashmir, deprived the accession of its true value and meaning, and without a doubt laid the seeds for trouble to grow. In the view of many this differential treatment given to a section of the people was misguided. Remember the mass fervour of the people which followed accession. It was, some people said, an act of uncalled for sophistication, lacking political vision. Some would even go further and attribute it

to weak political will and the softness of the emerging Indian state.

Of the two value-limiting factors of accession mentioned above, the one that provided for consultation with the people deserves little sympathy. History's verdict may endorse this standpoint in view of the ambivalence of conviction it reflected and the fact that residents of the valley were, at the time, unambiguously in sync with their leaders in respect to accession to India. But the Simla Agreement of the seventies almost wholly removed this flaw.

The provision in the Indian constitution conferring special status on this state is slightly different. It was designed presumably to provide the state with a defensive mechanism to withstand possible high-handedness on the part of central authorities and residents of the rest of the country. Well-intentioned, it had the opposite effect. Over time, everything became special in the state including whether it was day-to-day administration, treatment of minorities, respecting judicial decrees, leading to a general lowering of norms and standards and other ills.

The Aftermath of Accession.

In the mayhem generated by the uprising in the valley in 1992, and which forced wide attention on it, it is almost forgotten that as a constituent state of India the state has much achievement to its credit in terms of political reform and social and economic change. Much of this has been described before but the task in hand demands a repeat with some emphasis.

A beginning was made by Sheikh Abdulla's administration in this direction. "New Kashmir" was his party's manifesto for social change and was used as a plank in political

activities. When in power, effort was made to place the plan on ground but progress was slow because the leadership went off course. As new political issues surfaced, economic and social development plans were, more or less, placed on the back burner.

From 1953 onwards, the state leaders devoted concerted attention to developing the state in a number of core areas vital for social progress so as to increase gainful employment for Kashmiris whose economic pursuits were largely agricultural yielding meager sustenance and work for only a few months of the year. Besides agriculture, small scale industries, art crafts peculiar to the genius of the people and tourism as an industry organised on modern lines to exploit Kashmir's huge potential in this sphere, were given high priority. So were plans drawn up for promoting progress in infra-structural facilities like power, transport and communications, which were woefully inadequate. In the sphere of social services like public health, medicine, and education, existing facilities being minimal, the challenge for change was pressing.

To stimulate change in an environment marked by a low economic base, limited opportunities for investment and lack of a skilled and motivated labour force, two basic requisites were: organisation and capital. The role of the state became paramount. The government of the state provided the former working with a sense of mission. The central government offered financial assistance, counsel and direction on a generous scale. In Kashmir, per capita outlay on plans in the sixties was reported to be the highest in the country. Results were seen, to state briefly, and only a few areas, in road and transport development on a wide scale, breaking the insulation of the valley, increased

food production, establishment of a medical college, a university, and an engineering college. The two colleges organised on modern lines offer instruction up to post-graduate level. So was the Kashmir University—established by the administration of Sheikh Abdulla—moved to a new campus built on a scenic site. It has grown into an institution of higher learning and with its large number of departments of various disciplines, including sciences, humanities the liberal arts and culture, it augurs well to be the lodestar in the effort to revive the life of the mind for which ancient Kashmir was famous.

With an increase in the value of gross domestic product, external trade of the state flourished. So did tourism. Tourists from all over the world visited the valley for decades. There was a demonstrable impact on the economic life of the people.

It is only fair, even at the cost of repetition, to make mention of the part played by Kashmiri Muslims in the task of relieving the economic condition of the people so that when the dust settles they are remembered gratefully. The catalogue is not short. I will mention only Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad's decision to have a medical college in the valley. Not having benefited from college education himself, his passion for change, including educational development, hastening its pace and diversifying it, was moving. Notwithstanding the difficulties of funding it, and more so, that of equipping it with staff that would pass muster, at a time when both teachers and scientific equipment were in short supply in the country, the college was established. The graduates it has turned out have earned a good name for themselves in and outside India. The same can be said about the Regional Engineering College set up in Srinagar which serves the northern region of India.

After Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Mr. G. M. Sadiq, a lawyer, intellectually profound and stimulating, a firm believer in societal management on secular lines, got a chance to head the state administration in the sixties and put his stamp on the social and economic life of the state. Then came the second war on Kashmir in 1965 and another in 1971. Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla appeared for the second time as chief minister in the seventies. He was not the same as before. The scenario was also different. After his death in 1982, Kashmir got leaders who would rank very low in the scale headed by old stalwarts like Sheikh Abdulla, Mr. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed and Mr. Sadiq. Any politician seemed to fit the bill.

The halcyon days of Kashmir were over. The two wars and deaths of major Kashmiri leaders produced uncertainty and a sense of insecurity among people. The state considered itself special and privileged. This aggravated social ills by encouraging authorities to shun moderation and caution. The minorities felt distressed. As mentioned before, in the eighties, the field was open and free for anti-center activities which were prompted from outside and fuelled by a regular in-flow of infiltrators, who had easy access along the line of control on the north-eastern border of the valley.

The Kashmiri persona: We may take a look at the Kashmiri persona. Kashmiris, Muslims and non-Muslims can claim to be a distinct cultural entity, a cultural construct as some might say. Are Kashmiris for that reason an ethnic group? We have a language rich in prose, poetry and idiom though it has been only recently recognized and put on the road to development. We occupy a compact piece of landed territory.

These terms, ethnicity and nationality, have recently acquired wide currency. There is, though, some murkiness

in their etymological and political usage. It is clear that like the primal tribal groups, people at large possess elements of commonality which hold them together. Nationality as an attribute of belonging to a nation is an enlarged manifestation of this commonality. It sounds odd to talk of tribalism and nationality in the same breath. The former carries the stigma of being egregiously narrow in conception, besides denoting primitivism, while nations are the bedrock of modern civilisation. It would be good for our understanding of history and the contemporary world events to note that while it is nations and nation-states that have achieved great triumphs in diverse fields of human endeavour they have also been the main vehicle responsible for incredible human pain and misery. The latest accretion of strength to this harm-inflicting potential of nation-states comes from their adoption of policies whereby separation of church and state stands annulled. The proliferation or resurfacing of ethnic groups and the increasing ascendancy of religious dogma in the running of states, particularly after the end of the cold war, have raised questions for the social scientist to answer on the modern state and international relationships.

Insulated by geographical location and inadequate transport and communication, these abstractions did not seem to hit the Kashmiri mind in the past. The political system, indeed, of the entire subcontinent was hardly conducive for the purpose, the basis of obedience to the Indian state not being a social contract. After accession, the people seem to have feelings stirred. The stipulation that people would be consulted in due course may have itself partly contributed to this. This, however, was a long term matter.

During my long years of close association with Muslims after accession, it never occurred to me that Muslims were

entertaining unfriendly feelings for the new political circumstances. There was some muted resentment among some public officials in the higher rungs of the bureaucracy over the removal from office of Sheikh Abdulla in 1953. Soon afterwards, however, and for long years, the spirit of willing cooperation and involvement in the execution of plan projects that prevailed among almost all members of the civil service held forth hope that Muslims were eager for economic development, and thereby approved the secular policies of the state and center of which the plans were an integral part. Furthermore, by assembling in impressively large numbers to hear their leaders, they offered a positive proof of this attitude. These meetings were quite frequently held all over the state, including remote areas of it.

I must at this point note down the presence of a small fringe of well-placed Muslim officials who were rather uncertain of the value of the Indian connection, careful not to push their cantankerousness too far lest it injure them. But they were not many.

What does this add up to? Why did the valley erupt as it did? There is no coherent explanation. A crazy quilt sort of picture emerges. Foremost among causative factors would be forces working from outside the state that have long been interested in destabilizing the Jammu and Kashmir state. Second would be the Kashmiris. There is no doubt it has to be stated again, that the intensity of the insurrection, with the heavy toll it has taken on human lives and the widespread destruction it has resulted in, owes much to a regular supply of men, money and materials, supported by adequate logistics from across the borders of the state. It has been called a proxy war.

As I have mentioned earlier, the valley was reasonably quiet in the early winter of 1986. There was unlawful activity going on for some time in a part of the city, but nothing

like a virtual breakdown of civil order was seen until time came when roving bands of armed men seemed to order people about and control the city of Srinagar. If a permit was required to start a business, one had to approach a specified individual or organisation not in the public domain. Suddenly, one might encounter an armed individual, without rhyme or reason, at one's door. I am quoting from a conversation with an old Kashmiri Muslim student of mine who holds a doctorate and was on a short visit to the United States. I met him at a party. This was in the winter of 1989 or 1990. He seemed honest in his sense of bewilderment over what was happening and was anxious about an uncertain future. Thus it was perhaps how the first brick was dropped. The state government soon managed to rise from their slumber and join battle which took a life of its own as time rolled by. The nature of the battle does not seem to have changed over the past four years. Only the armed militants owe allegiance to a number of organisations, sometimes placed at over 100, most of them foreign based, many militants having fought in mightier wars. Kashmiris also figure among armed militants.

Communalism is unhealthy. It is a social curse I was familiar with the proclivities of many educated Kashmiri Muslims, and while I cherished the company of those of them whose beliefs and actions were more in tune with mine, I had hope for and respect for the rest of them. I cannot bring myself to believe that individuals of either group would say that they hate their fellow non-Muslim Kashmiris, much less indulge in a killing spree. That is why my anguish is boundless in noting the utter lack of sympathy or expression of a dissenting voice on their part when, in the fury of violence let loose by militants, innocent non-Muslims were murdered, or serious threats of

intimidation were made against them asking them to vacate the valley. Once, of course, Muslims in a neighbourhood started a protest march at a particularly gruesome rape and murder of a non-Muslim family. But largely, there was silence.

My sorrow over the suffering of Muslims and non-Muslims in Kashmir and destruction of peace there is intense. Almost all Kashmiri Pandits have left the valley and are living in distressful conditions in other cities in the country. So have large numbers of Muslims fled the valley to live elsewhere in the country. I dare say that Kashmiri Muslims might be looking with horror over the turn things have taken, the unprecedented ugliness of it all, besides chaos and suffering, and asking why.

The large majority of Kashmiris live on land. They benefited appreciably from development expenditure on land. In my memory there were times when the tiller of the land, burdened, among other things, by a feudal system under which he lived, barely managed to survive several months before harvesttime. There was hardly any food in the countryside. Now he produces more and consumes more, including rice, a prestigious food for him. Roads were built into his homestead. Along with land reforms, irrigation works, improved seeds, and, above all, supply of electricity over large areas, made his pursuits a source of food and cash. What is more, he hardly paid any taxes. With old tenancy laws reformed, growing productivity, large numbers of peasant owners, and a thriving new class of orchardists, there were clear signs of economic improvement in large areas of rural Kashmir. The peasants as a class are given to a life of hard work, at least during summers, and peace. Since they are devoted believers, they would however offer a sympathetic target to be addressed by those intent on rousing people. But I am persuaded to

exclude them as people available on a large scale to answer such calls. The townspeople may go along, I hazard a guess, but not very eagerly in the beginning. This leaves the middle class, the educated section especially of whom mention has been made before.

My deep sense of dismay not untinged with sorrow is born of the attitude of this class. They profited most from planned development policies of the state government. They became educational, agricultural and veterinary experts, doctors, engineers, and accountants, to name the more important end products of educational institutions newly established. They came to man the huge bureaucracy which resulted from development expenditure running into millions of rupees. They manned the growing judiciary and the new police forces raised.

Much has been said about the fraudulent practices of the state authorities in rigging the 1987 election to the state assembly. There is almost a consensus about this view, and the event has been branded as the immediate cause of the revolt. It is forgotten, however, that 1982 elections, when Sheikh Adbulla was in office, were not unblemished either. From my personal knowledge largely based upon what a non-Muslim professor who was a returning officer at a booth said and the statement of another credible source, a venerable old man, the Congress party, also in the field, was placed on the shelf through a maze of devious ways. Some voters wanting to vote for its candidates were not able to enter the booth. The returning officer was too fearful to help. The lone policeman present showed studied indifference. This may be slender evidence. Later a non-Muslim engineer narrated a curious story. He went to offer Indian greetings to his boss, perhaps soon after the elections were over. He found a sizeable gathering of

Muslims and non-Muslims apparently on a similar mission. Tea was served. My reporter excused himself, as some do, for personal reasons. The host was not impressed and blurted out, "Yes, I can understand this. It is people like him who wanted us to vote for the Congress party and the Indian prime minister." The extent of the unlawful practices is not known nor what effect they had on the final outcome, but I have no doubt that some voters got a raw deal. What is more important is the mind-set which the engineer-host revealed. He appeared to be typical.

There is yet another example of what can cause distress to well-wishers of Kashmir and create in them feelings of being let-down. There was a one full-page statement in the *New York Times* some months back issued by a number of Kashmiri Muslim residents of USA bemoaning the ills created by the India-connection and seeking redress. How many of them were alumni of Kashmiri institutions I did not try to find out. Many of them should be, if not all. That they may have the right of self-expression is not in question. But I thought education hopefully liberates and broadens the mind, besides promoting objectivity. That is what the large financial outlay on their education was all about.

We end up with external forces exploiting over time susceptibilities of Kashmiris, a sympathetic educated middle class, inept state and central administrations, as the main causes of our troubles, in that order.

Prospect for the Future.

One approach towards a solution could be for the centre to call it a day. Kashmiris, an undeterminable number as

it is, have stepped into a psychological groove. The Indian is a Hindu who "has done us in!" they are prone to say. While certain unhinging of the social mind can result from the stand-off which circumstances have created, in principle, its unwarranted and wholly unjustifiable character deserves nothing but contempt. To allow such obscurantist and fanatical forces to prevail would, above all, be a moral disaster. Besides, one sound reason for ruling out this approach is that it is seriously flawed in terms of real politic. It does not need much argument to assert that the integrity and the unity of the Indian state is closely related to a continuation of the present status of Jammu and Kashmir. The problem, however, would remain.

The answer is simple but a more basic aspect of the matter has to be addressed first. It is not only India which is caught in the quagmire of secessionist activities or the aspirations of ethnic or nationalistic groups. It is, besides, an old problem. At the present juncture it has assumed a serious form having flared up as a legacy of the cold war after it ended.

Whatever be our beliefs, it has to be conceded that the former Soviet Union purchased peace by denying religion a role in secular affairs of the state and recognizing the existence of nationalities and ethnic groups. The problems were not pushed under the rug. Within the constraints of a federal polity they were granted autonomy for developing their individuality. Some years ago, during my tour of some cities of the former Soviet Union, I found no signs of restiveness there, in respect to their cultural activities. To the contrary there was evidence of much satisfaction in this regard, particularly in Georgia. Now, of course, the jinni is out of the bottle and societies are faced with a rash of agitating populations asking for Wilsonian self-determination or outright sovereign status.

We live in an environment in which the world tends to shrink as a result of advances in the communication industry to name only one field of technological advance. Imagine the mind-boggling world in which the super-information highway, which purports a link-up between the telephone, the video, the television and the satellite system, will land us. One can talk to and perhaps see people thousands of miles away. The electronic mail and the electronic library are enabling information to cross national borders in seconds. We are faced with a paradox here in the conflicting results of two forces, one tending to widen extensively the space over which we can spread our lives and the other constricting it by creating tension within and between nations. A way has to be devised to reconcile the compulsions of these forces. Ethnic minorities and other groups can be offered autonomous authority to the fullest possible extent enabling them to protect, if they needs must, their special features. Is it necessary to invest them with statehood and sovereign status? It is at this point that the principle of self-determination becomes a source of trouble because ethnic and other groups with special characteristics sometimes live across existing national borders. Look at the prevailing situation in the Balkans, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union.

Coming back to our problem we find that Kashmiris here enjoyed a full measure of political authority over their affairs for about a half century. They have chosen to cast it away. A movement has been launched which is resisted on the ground that Kashmiris have been led to take a course of action, which would turn out to be harmful for them, by forces and circumstances over which a majority of them had no control. The need of the hour is to call for a cooling-off period so that Kashmiris can deliberate in quiet circumstances among themselves, over the impasse,

Kashmiri Muslims and non-Muslims, even those living outside the subcontinent.

This might be considered unrealistic. In that event, people in the subcontinent would do well to take a long and cold look at recent events in the Balkans. The century which is soon to end has known several bloody wars, each successive war bloodier than the previous one. The war in Bosnia, now in progress, it is alleged, has beaten recorded history in respect to death, destruction and inhumanity to which civilians have been subjected. "Ethnic cleansing," an expression which has been added to war vocabulary is relevant to our discussion. It aims at eliminating people not belonging to a specified ilk. It is the opposite of working for a pluralistic society.

India's democratic order is a mosaic of diverse groups. The polity is governed and sustained by laws. There is an independent judiciary and a free press. People have basic human rights and every person, no matter what his faith or colour of skin may be is equal before the law. The system has suffered tremours, some of them serious, but it has shown almost admirable resilience.

People who talk of establishing a state in India with a Hindu flavour, to use a mild term, are well-intentioned, dedicated patriots. Professor Malkhani is one of them. His book on his party, its history, raison d'etre and aims is a closely reasoned book of much merit. Hindus have suffered historically at the hands of invaders professing other faiths, resulting in their enslavement for centuries, one particular danger arising from the extraterritorial obligations of these people, the newcomers. Hindus are, therefore, warned about their future in a pluralistic society, and though the protagonists of a changed order promise equal status to all people, the promise is too vague. The present democratic order will clearly be in danger.

The inevitability of opposition to a pluralistic order under pressure of circumstances and the misguided and over-reaching policies of the party long in power at the centre is obvious, but we should not lose sight of perspective and the basics bearing on the matter, prominent among them being the concept of humanity. How does it serve society to downgrade some sections of the people. Furthermore to carry historical grievances and try to be even after hundreds of years is as unhealthy for societies as it is for individuals. The irony of the matter is that it is mainly politics and not a very sound one.

In perfect candour it must be stated that a pluralistic policy in India is intimately linked to the destiny of Jammu and Kashmir. India, the land of the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi, should not let ground slip from under its feet. There is need for honing up the pillars on which the country's multi-cultural democracy rests so that laws ensuring equality to all citizens are enforced in letter and spirit. It is a daunting task and only through constant vigilance can disruptive forces inside and outside the country be thwarted in their designs.